Simon Peter Fisherman

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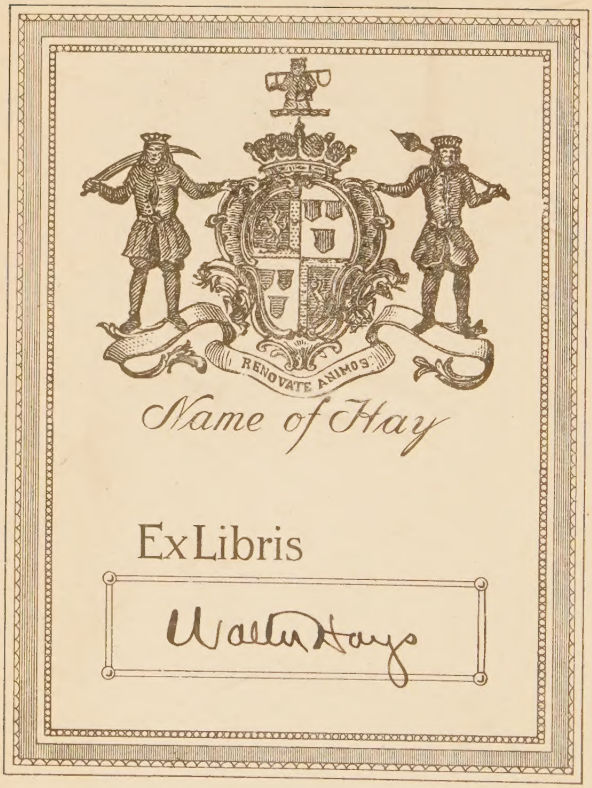

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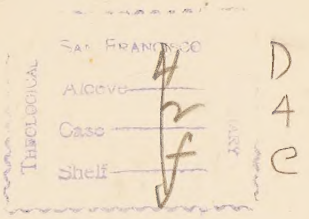


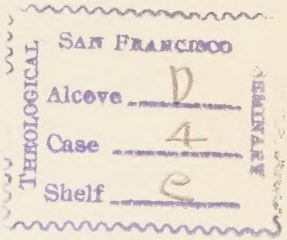
SIMON PETER
FISHERMAN

By

"THOMAS"

189

"The souls of men were dried like dew,
And earth cried out with bitter need,
Until one said, 'I dare be true,'
And followed up the word with deed,
Then heaven and earth were born anew,
And one man's name became a creed!"



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To

"Peter" and "John"

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SIMON PETER, FISHERMAN

CHAPTER I

I CAN never forget Simon Peter nor the month I spent with him on the Sea of Galilee. 'Tis twenty years since I left him waiting to glorify his Master in his death—yes, more than twenty years since that dark night when we toiled together against wind and wave till the fourth watch of the morning; still it seems as if it were only yesterday.

It was Peter who first called me Thomas, and who gave to my companion and lifelong friend the name of John; who enriched these names with associations and memories so unique and helpful that we love to use them in every moment of intimacy with little thought of the arbitrarily given names of youth, and less of the courteous distinctions of church or school. John will ever be John and only

John to me, and Peter in very truth the leader of the chosen Twelve.

At the time of which I write John was pastor of a church down in Maine and I of one in B——. We were intimate friends, loving one another as only brother ministers can. We had been chums in college and in the seminary, had entered Conference together, had married sisters, and had been near neighbors during our first two pastorates. John had taken a transfer to Maine partly on account of his health and partly because of an advancement in grade of appointment. His salary was not much larger, but his position relatively far higher than he thought he could reach if he remained in the N— —— Conference. He had succeeded well, very well, as he would undoubtedly have succeeded had he stayed by his first choice, and at the time of our peculiar experience was pastor of a strong church in P——. He had urged me to spend my vacation

with him, and I had waited for no second invitation.

"Mary and Martha," wrote he, "can take care of themselves and the children without your help or mine, for two or three weeks at least. Indeed, I guess they'll be glad to have us out of the way. You and I can rough it in the woods while they go to the cottage in Southwest Harbor. I know what I want and I think I know what you want; and, if you say so, we'll go fishing with Simon Peter."

It was this last sentence in his letter that I asked him about as we drew near to camp a few weeks later. "Who is Simon Peter?" said I. "Why did you call that little town back there in the hills Nazareth? Are we on the road to Galilee?" I forget his answer, some sort of an affirmative; but I had guessed the truth, for such at times it seems to have been. For nearly a month we practically ignored the fact that nineteen centuries and thousands of miles separated us from

the historic "Holy Land," and seemed to disavow our training in the creeds and customs and church life of modern times. We lived as it were in other days, amid other scenes, and kept choice company with the leader of the Twelve and his Master.

All that John knew of Peter was quickly told as we made our way down the carry to his camp. Years before, Simon Peter was living in one of the inland towns of the State. Though poor—he was no more than a fairly successful mechanic—he seemed born to be a leader and, in a necessarily restricted circle, was recognized as such. By nature he was impulsive, magnetic, courageous; by the grace of God, a man of holy life, simple faith, and rare power for righteousness in a humble Christian church. He knew God and ever lived as in His presence. He had remarkable insight into human nature, and consequently broad charity. His little training in the schools had left

his mind free to follow its own methods of work and reach its own independent conclusions; even in John's day—when he was pastor in that town—people used to refer to the strength and quaint originality of his interpretation of Scripture.

Among his friends was a laboring man of sturdy manliness and unsullied purity of character. His name I never knew, nor much of his history. He was a carpenter by trade. A fearful crime was committed. Circumstantial evidence convicted him of murder. Two or three of his companions gave damaging testimony —fearfully untrue, as was afterward shown; so that he was sentenced to the extreme penalty—and Simon lost his reason.

For a time Peter was kept under guard, till it was thought that he had recovered; but one day he was missing. A little boy reported that he had seen a man answering his description hurrying along at nightfall through the edge of a neighbor-

ing village saying over and over again, "Go tell Peter that He goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him." For more than twenty-five years nothing had been heard of him, and it was supposed by the very few who remembered the story that he was dead. It was John who had found him in one of his venturesome vacation trips into the woods, and he and I were the only ones, with one exception, who ever afterward met him.

"He did me good," said John, with hearty simplicity, "even though I was with him only a few days. He brought the Master very near to me, and gave a reality to the old stories of the gospel that even now is a daily inspiration. He rolled away the stone before the grave, and the Lord appeared in newer life."

"And you think he'll do me good?" said I, suggestively.

"Yes," said John, "I do."

I knew very well what he meant. If ever there lived a noble man it was John.

Conscientious to the extreme, affectionate as a woman, unselfish and yet ambitious to further his own aims where they conflicted in no sense with the rights of others, he justified his name. I knew all about his fight for freedom, the misery of his depression and self-consciousness due to his highly sensitive nature, and his literal reception of the New Testament ideal of character—and I knew too of his victory and his entrance at last into the sunshine of a simpler and less selfish faith; and I began to suspect that Simon Peter might have had something to do with the change. Everybody said that it was the summer vacation four or five years before that had made him what he now was. He had come back from the woods a different man. During the following winter he had preached the gospel of the living Christ with a simplicity and fervor and holy abandon such as he had never shown before; and God was wonderfully honoring his ministry. Many a time I had

almost envied him. Sunday after Sunday I brought to the church the best results of a week of honest study, only to feel that the food I had for the people was no more suited for their need than the few unblessed and unbroken loaves and fishes for the hungry thousands on the hillside of Galilee. What I had needed the Master's touch, and for some reason or other it did not seem that I could get it.

I knew what he meant. He was hoping that the old fisherman would help me too; for John knew me as well, and kindly, as I knew him. For years hardly a week had passed without the exchange of letters, and to him as to no one else had I told the story of my longing for a better sight of Christ. He never chided me because of my gloom; indeed, he was kind enough to say that I had the rare virtue of stern self-judgment, and consequently of stern self-condemnation, and to commend me because, as he said, I was honest enough and loyal enough to the God of

truth to "prophecy according to the proportion of faith" and never beyond it. Notwithstanding this too frequent melancholy mood of mine, I never believed that I was out of place in the pulpit. At times I felt that it would break my heart if I were compelled to leave it, yet I had to think of such a step as a possibility. I needed a personal Easter Day. I needed one of the forty days of the resurrection life of Christ, worth more to a man of my temperament than a year of the Galilean ministry on its path toward the cross. Many a day at the communion table of our Lord had I cried from the depths of a troubled yet expectant soul, "Reveal thyself unto me, O Lord, in the breaking of bread," yet I had not seen Him as I wanted, and as I believed I had the right to think I would yet see Him.

"So you think he would do me good, too?" said I again.

"Yes," said John, who had been quietly watching me, "I do."

CHAPTER II

"PETER," said I the morning after our arrival, "how did you come to place your camp here? Is the fishing better in this lake than anywhere else? Couldn't you find a quiet spot without coming so far away?"

It was a foolish question, and I immediately regretted it; I saw what the answer would be, and felt instinctively that it was bad policy, to say the least, to appear so painfully out of sympathy with my surroundings and my peculiar host.

"I was told to come here," was the simple answer.

"Who told you? The Master?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Easter Morning, at the class meeting. A friend brought me the message from the tomb. But," and here he hesitated

for a moment and looked at me searchingly, "who are you, anyway? I thought you were Thomas. You look like him, and from what John told me last night you ordinarily act like him; but Thomas isn't the man to forget the story of that day or to talk the way you've been talking ever since you came here. Who are you, I say? What did you come here for?"

The words were sharp and suggestive of rising anger with possibly something of fear, though behind them all I saw the evidence of bitter disappointment, if not of positive pain. The poor fellow had been looking for the rest of the Twelve—or some of them—for years.

"I can't tell you," said I, quietly. "You can call me Thomas, if you want to, though that is not my name. I'm enough like him, God knows, in moments of doubt, and I hope at my best in my loyalty. Still, you'll have to look elsewhere for the Thomas you used to know; and if you were the man you think you are"—

I was now speaking as sharply as Peter had, though with no justification, really more in grief than in anger, more to myself than to him, chagrined because I had so speedily spoiled the pious little conceit of John—"if you were really Simon Peter and my old friend there John; if this little lake were really the Sea of Galilee; if all these years of progress and pain, these centuries of mingled sunshine and gloom, were really no more fact than an old fisherman's fancies, I suppose I might quite easily pass for Thomas."

As I spoke a gradual change came over his face. Anger gave way to sadness, and fear to eager interest. The hard lines softened and the danger light proved to be no more than the lightning flash. He came quickly toward me, seized me impulsively, put a soulful of welcome into the first demonstration of greeting he had shown me, looked into my eyes longingly for a moment—and then hurried away to find John. "Poor fellow," I heard him

say. "I understand all about it. I felt that way once." I saw him tap his forehead significantly and point toward me. Ever afterward, no matter what I said or did, Peter could not be shaken in his belief that I was Thomas; and for patient sympathy, tender care, and unlooked-for little kindnesses he was the equal, I doubt not, of the apostle whose name he bore. I overheard him praying for me more than once, and his prayers at last were answered.

I found him eager to talk when next we met, a few hours later. We had just finished our supper and were seated a little back from the full glow of the camp fire, ready for the sympathy and confidences inseparable from such a scene of unbroken peace. Before us lay the little lake lazily rocking itself to sleep; behind us swayed the untrodden forest stretching back for miles over mountain side and valley, giving fragrance to every breath of welcome and a hiding place to

many a timid tuneful host. The breaking of the little waves upon the shore, the crackling of the newly kindling boughs, and the occasional call of some belated bird to his mate were the only sounds heard; and they simply emphasized the sense of glorious rest.

"Yes," said Peter, "you seem to have forgotten some of the scenes of that day. You missed it, not coming to the prayer meeting. Some of us, you know, had seen Him—Mary for one. She had been out to the graveyard early that morning and had met Him face to face! had heard Him call her by name; had spoken to Him about His going home—had even tried to hold Him back when He said He was going right away; had taken Him, you know, for the gardener at first before she turned around to look at Him. Even then she didn't know Him right off, because her eyes were filled with tears and her interest was elsewhere—why, she paid no sort of heed even to the angels who

would have made an Elisabeth or a Hannah happy for a lifetime just to have seen them. She took Him, I say, for the gardener till He called her name 'Mary.' It was a testimony to be remembered, Thomas, that she gave that night, and it seems strange that you don't recall it. You missed it, I tell you, in not having heard her give it. It takes a woman to tell the story when she herself is the center of the love that's in it. The other women had their story, too—for they had seen Him about the same time that Mary had and had received the message from Him for the rest of us which brought me here. Then before the meeting closed I had my experience to give, and Cleopas and Luke had theirs—the best of all for it was the latest—and then the Master Himself came. You can get an idea, Thomas, of the eagerness of those two men who had just come back from Emmaus when you know that the Master had left the town before them but had been

passed by them somewhere on the road. I guess they had run the entire distance. And the way they felt, we all felt. Talk about your 'burning heart'! Every one of us had it. You missed it, Thomas, you missed it."

"He was there eight days afterward, you know," suggested John.

"Where did you hold your meetings?" said I, regardless of this well-meant endeavor to secure for me the favor of Peter. "I mean, where was your upper room?"

"In the church, of course," replied Peter, "in the vestry of the old church on High Street. We used to meet there Tuesday and Thursday nights as well as Sundays; not many of us, it's true, still He was always there, and sometimes the room was crowded. I've seen as many as thirty at the altar at one time seeking forgiveness."

"Thomas was there eight days afterward," said I, hastily, fearing that he was

treading on dangerous ground. "I want to hear the rest of your story of those early days."

"Wèll," said Peter, "if you don't remember our story, I remember yours—and if you want it, I'll tell you—though it seems as if you ought to be speaker, not I. 'Twas your love that made you doubt what we told you—your large faith, not your little faith; your big heart and your loyalty to the Master. If you'd loved Him less you would have believed every word we said. Maybe it's all right for you, John, to call yourself that disciple whom Jesus loved. Still, I don't like it. There were others who loved Him just as much as you did, and there were others who thought that He loved them as much as He did you. Remember the message Mary and Martha sent, don't you? 'He whom thou lovest is sick.' No name given, and yet they knew that He would know who was meant. So Thomas thought; had an idea that if he were

ready, when the rest of the Twelve hung back, to go to Judea that he might die with Him, the Master would be ready to do as much in return. You couldn't conceive, so you said, of your Master up and around among His friends and not finding you. 'I don't believe He has risen, and I won't believe it, either, till I see for myself. The idea that He has time and desire to hunt up all the rest of you and pass me by is more than I can bear. If He can walk to Emmaus with Cleopas and that other disciple who never made any stir among us, and linger around in the garden waiting for Mary and the rest of the women, and hunt up Simon Peter, who had just denied Him'—that's the way you put it, Thomas, and 'twas true—'and find James, and then meet the ten of you together, He can find me; and what's more, if He's risen He would find me. I don't believe that there's a spot in Jerusalem where we'd worked together that He wouldn't have

visited. He would have found me in my home, or out in the fields where I used to pray, or down among the poor, or somewhere—I'm sure of it; and if it comes to disbelieving either Him or you—yes, the whole lot of you—I'll believe Him. You can't give me testimony enough to prove that the grave doesn't hold Him. If it's a fact that He is risen, He must show it for Himself.' That's about what you said, Thomas, isn't it?"

"I don't know," said I, though I hated woefully to disappoint him. "I reckon that's about the way Thomas felt; that much I can say. But why did you come here?" added I, returning to my first question.

"Because He asked me to," said he, evidently perplexed if not annoyed at my clumsiness as well as density. "I was sure of one thing—He hadn't forgotten me. Even a command to come would have been a blessing, I felt so bad. If He had forgotten me I'd have died; for I

was mighty sensitive over my denial, and felt that there was precious little to choose between Judas and myself. He sold the Master for a bit of silver, while I sold Him for the smile of a servant girl. 'Twas worth everything to know that He hadn't forgotten me. Friday and Saturday were awful days. The thought of the tomb where He lay, and where our hopes lay, too; the bitter memory of that hour by the fire in Pilate's courtyard; and the pain of His look that broke my heart—it's a wonder that I stood it. Some didn't. Some of us lost their reason and went around aimlessly, as if in a dream. Some went off home. A few held on to a bit of hope till Sunday. 'Twas everything to hear one of the women call out to me on Easter Day, 'Have you heard His message? "Go tell my disciples and Peter that I go before you into Galilee."' Go tell Peter! Not Simon, mind you: He kept that for our private meeting on the seashore yonder. Go tell Peter! Why,

Thomas, if what had followed had been a command to go to my death to atone for my fearful sin I'd have hailed the message just the same. There's nothing like being remembered. 'Thank God,' said I, 'He remembers me still.'

" 'So,' said I, a little later, as the beauty of it began to dawn upon me, 'He wants to meet me in Galilee. In Galilee! In the old familiar place—His old home and my old home, too.' God knows I would have gone to meet Him anywhere; to the judgment hall, to the cross, to the center of the sneering cowards who could pierce Him when dying but who couldn't face Him coming out of His grave—anywhere, yes, anywhere—and would have thanked God for the glorious chance—but to Galilee! that was too much. I was sick of Judea. Every spot suggested failure or strain or burden of some sort. Not so the old home—I loved every hill and valley, every village and town. Even He was a different man when there—under less ten-

sion, with less of fearful care; He saw something besides the cross, heard something besides the moan of a sinful world, lived a little bit in the present. Now and then He'd stop to watch the sower scatter his seed, or the shepherd tend his flock, or the fisherman mend his nets; would hear the young raven cry for his food, or see the sparrow fall from his nest to the ground; would see the beauty of the lily by the path or the pathos of the bruised reed. Not so in the city. He didn't see much there. Jerusalem was a large place and full of strange scenes and packed full of lessons for such a mind as the Master had; but He seemed to see very little of it all. One great hill loomed up before Him and He walked in the shadow—and saw life in the shadow—that it cast. 'Thank God!' said I, 'I'm going to get out of this place home again. Judas belongs here, but the Master and the rest of us belong in Galilee.'

"Then, too," added the old man, aglow

and eager with his thought, evidently thinking in his simplicity and loyalty that he was honoring his Master in his simple story, "He made it mighty easy for me. He said He was going on ahead—'I go before you into Galilee.' None of us could feel that we ought to stay around the city after that. There was much to be done there—a good many well-intentioned disciples to be looked after, four or five hundred all told; a good many lies to be answered, and a lot of sermons to be preached and converts to be made—but He knew it all. If He could leave of course we could. I think I'd have felt pretty mean if I'd gone up to Galilee ahead of Him—if I had left Him alone in the center of His enemies—but I didn't have to. Before I started on the road He was a good distance ahead. Then, thought I, if there's anything to say about these past few days up there in the old home—if any one of the old friends wants to hear what has happened—He'll be the

one to tell it all. There isn't one of us that will get there before Him. If there's anything to be done He will see to it. If He has any new plan He'll get it well started. Of course I came to Galilee. Mind you," added he, "I would have gone on ahead if He had said so. If He had sent word that He was going to preach to the spirits in prison—going to descend into hell even—and wanted me to sort of clear the way for Him, I'd have gone, and mighty gladly, too. I felt so bad over that sin of mine, and I felt so glad that He had made it all right, I would have gone anywhere—alone, too—and miles ahead of the rest if He had said so. Of course I came to Galilee."

The old man was walking up and down before the fire as he spoke, seemingly more and more unconscious of his surroundings. John and I were evidently by this time absolutely out of his thought. I doubt if he saw us. He looked out over our heads to the shadow of the great

woods beyond, raised his voice to a higher clearer note, and spoke less rapidly though with greater fluency, accompanying his words with more and more of gesture, unstudied though full of grace and force. We saw in a moment that he thought he was preaching; that he saw before him some scene of other days—some night service of a Methodist camp meeting in the woods, it may be; that in the shadows of the forest there were sitting hundreds of fellow-sinners, many of them unawakened and many on the point of turning to God, and that he was the privileged one who should give the exhortation.

"He can't forget you, brother," cried he at last. "You have been too much to Him, and He has been too much to you. He wants to meet you in the old place—right here where once you saw Him—right here where we're ready to pray for you; and if you come, you'll find He's waiting—He'll get here first. Come, he bids you, come."

I do not know how we quieted him, or ourselves, either, for that matter. I know that we all prayed, and that finally during the prayer of John there came peace, and that Simon somehow or other seemed to find himself just when we began to dread the worst. The sermon had its effect upon me, and I could think of little else. "Would to God," said I, as I looked at my companions at last asleep, "that I could send home a word as straight as that of Simon Peter, and every word the truth, too. Guess this is Galilee, after all."

CHAPTER III

"PETER," said I, a few days later, as we were resting at noon at the end of a hard morning's tramp along the northern shore of the lake, "how did the Master look? Was He like John? Like me? I'll trust your word," said I, as for some reason he hesitated to reply, "more than that of anybody else—infinitely more than the opinion of the best of the gloomy monks or the unregenerate artists of the schools of modern days."

This question, I should add, was the result of a conversation between John and myself. For a time John had held to the traditional conception of the appearance of Christ—to the halo idea, the effeminate dress, the far-away heavenly gaze, the lofty unapproachableness, and the mystical indefiniteness that had taken away the Lord from many a humble be-

liever. For a few years he had talked mysteriously about the "God-Man," or when especially daft—though he thought scholarly — about the "Theanthropos." Once he told me when I said something about the limitation of the life of faith which the Master led in common with the rest of us, "True, He did not know this as man, but He did know it as God"—to my disgust and I think a little later to his own. On the other hand, I had maintained that the Master was a man, and that He had looked like a man; though in some way all of God that could be put into a perfect human soul, where there was no sin nor feebleness of power, was in Him too. "If you want to quibble over a phrase," said I, "and go back to the slavery of the schoolroom, He was all God but not all of God; and He was all of Man, too. Even after He had risen from the grave He took pains to dissipate the ethereal conception that some even then held. 'Handle me,' said He, 'spirits

have not flesh and bones such as I have.' "

"Did He look like either of us?" repeated I, as Peter still hesitated to answer.

"No," said he, "He didn't. First of all, neither one of you is enough of a man—I mean in physical force or beauty. You are not strong enough. He could wear out a dozen such men as you are. For fifteen years or so He had been a hard-working mechanic, much of the time in the open air, with all the work that He could possibly do. They used to come to Him from all the country round—partly because they liked Him, and partly because He did absolutely honest work—so that He was known as 'the Carpenter;' when He stood up to preach His first sermon that was the name they identified Him by—He was 'the Carpenter,' and that meant among other things a good hard workman, and that meant good health. Then, too, He used the simplest food. Even when He could get just what

He wanted during His days of popularity here in Galilee He lived on fish and bread; the food He gave the five thousand was what He had intended for the Twelve and Himself. Then, too," added Peter, quite deliberately—I saw now the reason of his former hesitation; he had been summoning his answers in more regular order than was usual—"He knew nothing of sin from personal experience; He had never done wrong—had never weakened His force by unholy dreams, or intemperate desires, or unbalanced actions; had never felt the bite of remorse, or the weight of a sinful memory. He always did that which was pleasing in the sight of God—and His body could but show it."

"'His strength was as the strength of ten,
Because His heart was pure,'"

added John, quietly, unconsciously doing for Peter what he did always for himself in his own work—fortifying a bit of independent thinking on the part of a disciple

by the ringing declaration of the same truth in the words of a master.

"Yes," said Peter, somewhat surprised, not knowing, of course, the source of the quotation or that it was a quotation—"Yes," said he, "though I said a dozen—and that's little enough. You remember the time He cleaned out the temple, don't you?—the time He frightened the very life out of the money changers and those who sold doves? Well, all the rest of us put together couldn't have done what He did that day alone. They didn't leave for shame," added he, quickly taking almost the very words out of the mouth of John in his shrewd reading of our thought, "but because they were scared. They weren't the men to feel shame; they didn't know the meaning of the word. They weren't overpowered by His holiness, not a bit of it. They heard the swing of the stinging lash, and they knew a strong man was after them. They concluded to get out while they had a

chance," chuckled the old man, keenly in sympathy with his own interpretation, "and study His divinity outdoors on the sidewalk."

"Was that the reason," said I, "why the rabble that followed Judas—soldiers, too, a good many of them—didn't dare face Him in the garden of Gethsemane?"

"Yes," said Peter, "partly the reason, at any rate. Why imagine that hard-hearted, thick-skinned, dull-brained sinners who hadn't had a quiver of decent emotion for years could all of a sudden see beauties and glories that we couldn't see till after Pentecost? They were scared, I tell you, for they saw a strong man after them in noblest anger."

"You're going too far, Peter," said John, "You've no right to speak of Him as angry."

"What's that?" said he. "I wasn't through talking about the temple—I'm not so sure about the scene in Gethsem-

ane. No right to think of Him as angry! What's the matter with you? If He was never angry where did He get some of the words He used—or, rather, where did He get the inclination to use them? I remember once, when we were coming home one night after meeting, as we turned the corner of Water Street—at the corner of Water and Pleasant—that a little child ran crying out of a tenement house right into our very arms, and that after her there lumbered along a crazy, swearing, drunken brute of a man. I remember that the Carpenter—"

"You were talking about the appearance of the Master," said I, with a rare inspiration of good sense. "Of course He was angry—let that go for a time. You gave us one of your old sermons with your firstly, secondly, and thirdly, you know, proving that He was a man every inch of Him."

"Yes," said John, "and if this is so—this that you say of His manly strength—

then He must have toiled fearfully during the last three years to have weakened under His burdens as He did. Did He?"

"Did he?" responded Peter, reverently. "Did He? When He began His ministry He was only thirty years old; when He quit—I mean when they killed Him—He was thirty-three, and yet He had aged so that close critics said He was somewhere near fifty. Work it out either way you want to, you will see what sort of a man He was. If you start with some sort of an idea of the weight of His burden, you will see what His strength must have been to have carried it so long; if you start with an idea of His strength, you'll get a conception of what He must have done for you to have weakened under it so soon."

"By the way, Thomas," said he, after a pause broken by no question on the part of either of us, "why do you look so tired out? What's the matter with you?" I suppose the contrast between the tireless

Worker of whom he had been speaking and myself drew a closer attention to my condition. "One would think to look at you that you ought to have come to Galilee when I did."

In my answer I told him frankly and fully of my work as a minister of Christ in the busy days in which we live; of my church in the city with its thousand and one cares; of my habits of study; of the strain upon my sympathy as I saw the needs of the poor and sick and sinful so imperfectly met by anything that I could do; of the danger of the deadening effect of continued contact with the woes of life, the benumbing at last of the priceless powers of a tender heart; and of my lonely struggles at times with doubt when it seemed as though there was no one near to help. "Mary and Martha," said I, in answer to a questioning look on the part of John, "had to wait two days in gloom while the Master delayed His coming. I was no better than they. The

Syrophœnician woman, who had faith more than anyone whom Christ had met, for some inscrutable reason failed to get for a time any kind of an answer to her piteous plea for aid. She prayed as few of us have prayed, yet He answered her never a word. I was surely no better than she; yet," added I, "I have kept my faith, have beaten my way through, have found Him at last, and intend to trust Him to the end, in daylight or gloom. Still I'd like what the saints call 'the second blessing.' Peter, I want you to pray for me."

"I've already done so," said he, with hearty simplicity, "and am going to keep at it till you get out into the light—that is," added he, "if God wants you in the light. Maybe He has to keep you in the darkness—who knows? Do you remember the prayer of the mother of James and John? She wanted her children—and I suppose they were agreeable too," said he, somewhat vindictively—"to get the

highest blessing that the Master had to give; she thought that all she had to do to get it was to ask in faith believing—but she failed. Who's to say whether you'll be better as a helper and a saviour of your fellows under the light of a great and novel revelation of God or in the gloom of the average man. Seems to me," said the old fellow, quite decidedly, "that you smash your humility to make your faith; and I don't believe that pays. Quit your worrying, I say, and go about your business right where you are, and God will guide you where He wants you. As for me," continued he, unable to get an answer from John, at whom he was slyly thrusting, "I don't dare to worry. I'd go mad if I did. What is more, I don't dare to pray the way some of you do—I'd slip away from the faith I have. I 've come to believe that God wants me to thank Him honestly and practically for what I've got through His mercy and grace, and not continually to wrestle

around in the straw to get more. Thomas, trust God; you are risen with Christ, seek the things which are above—but seek them as a man has to, walking right along on the ground, climbing every hill that puts one nearer heaven, and not howling in the valley for Elijah's chariot of fire or the Master's ascension robes. Howl all you want to, you'll never get them. Still, I'll pray for you; for God knows I love you both."

"What did He look like?" said I. "You haven't said anything yet about His appearance." I had no words at that time to thank Peter for his thought of me, and so reverted to my first question.

"Well," said he, somewhat hesitatingly, for he had very little in his well-read gospel story with which to make an answer, and he was just then confining himself pretty close to the Christ we knew, not to the memory of his Carpenter friend of recent days, "He looked like the rest of us. John the Baptist didn't,

for he kept away from the people and thought 'twas the pious thing to look peculiar. He looked like the rest of us—dressed like us, for one thing, wore the same sort of clothes that we did. The Roman soldiers weren't fools enough to cast lots for garments that they couldn't do anything with—didn't throw their dice just for the fun of the game; wanted what he had—the dress of a man, and a well-dressed man, too. He acted like the rest of us—knew how to laugh and smile and get a good deal at times out of life as we saw it. He had His wit as well as His wisdom; gave me my name as a sort of kindly joke. 'The word you've said,' said He to me when I'd come out flatly with my belief that He was the Messiah, 'that word is the very Foundation Stone on which I'll build my church. And you are a Stone too, Peter—mind that, a Stone, not the shifting sand.' So He called me a Stone or a Rock ever after. Do you suppose that a man who had

never laughed would have been invited to a wedding feast?—and to a pretty hilarious one, too, for they drank up all the wine and wanted more, and a man is likely to be a pretty liberal provider for such an occasion. Do you think they would have had John the Baptist there? Do you think any other man would have been so heartily in accord with the good cheer of the home as to start his miracle-working then and there ahead of his preconceived time to show his power? Do you suppose that He could take the children up in His arms and not smile at them? Do you think that He could watch the children play their games and look like a weeping Jeremiah? Do you suppose that we would have the record that He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, if He had been crying all the time? I heard you quote a word from Isaiah this morning in your prayer that has been worked to death—'the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, with no form nor

beauty that we should desire Him.' Those words are all right in their place, and mean a lot when you get at them from the right point of view, but they are overworked. Try this for a while," said he, dryly, "and see what you make out of it: 'He was fairer than all the sons of men.' Granted that He was a man of sorrows; when did sorrow make a true man gloomy or repulsive? Some of the sweetest and most beautiful faces—yes, most manly faces—that I have ever seen have been those of people who have been 'minished and brought low,' as David put it, 'through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.'"

"True," said I, cordially and yet laughing back at him my first question, "but what was His face like?"

"He had a high forehead," replied the old fellow, not to be outdone, "high enough to hold a crown of thorns. He had a clear eye—for one look from it broke my heart; a Jewish face, for the

Samaritan woman knew Him for a Jew immediately; and grace and glory and a gleam of truth, for John once said so. That's all I can say now. We used to sing a hymn," added he, "in the old church that put it just right," and as he spoke he lifted his voice to God in glorious and well-timed praise:

> "'Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
> Upon the Saviour's brow;
> His head with radiant glories crowned,
> His lips with grace o'erflow.'"

"I remember," said he, suddenly, breaking off the hymn after one verse, "that the Carpenter used to sing that hymn as few could do it. It was his favorite. The night they took him for murder we had been holding a meeting together in one of the little schoolhouses.

"Peter," said I, "do you know from what you say that I think you look like Him?"—glad to stop if I could the sad commingling of fact and pathetic fancy. "Do you know that you look like the Master?"

"Do I?" said he, back again where we wanted him, flushing a bit under the roughened skin tanned by the suns and storms of years. "Do I? God knows I want to!"

CHAPTER IV

I THINK I said a little while ago that John had left a city church that he might better his appointment. To a certain extent this was true. He was ambitious—there was no doubt of that—but not unworthily so. He believed that he had the right to use his tools where he could get the most from a day's work, and where the work—because of its size or character—could get the most from him. He believed it, and was honest enough frankly to assert it. There was, however, another reason, though I did not know of it for years, or rather did not give to it its true importance. In his last church in the city there was a man whom he did not like and with whom he could not easily work. I never knew his name—he used laughingly to refer to him as Diotrephes. This man was arbitrary and

opinionated, a self-constituted expert in the diagnosis of Christian experience, a Gallio so far as affairs of "the world" were concerned, a healthy, hearty heretic-hunter, yet as John said somewhat hesitatingly—all the more credit to him—"a mighty good man." He could get no prominence out in the world among his fellows—indeed, he was overwhelmingly defeated when he ran for the position of assistant doorkeeper in his lodge—yet for some inscrutable reason he came to the front in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to the front and stayed at the front, and welcomed in the front ranks time and time again men like himself in caliber, creed, and character. John said that he was elected first of all Sunday school superintendent. "It happened," said he, "that at the annual meeting of the board when the election took place there were present only four men—four men, a goodly number of women, and the giggling youth of both sexes from the

normal and senior classes of the school. One of the men was the old superintendent, heartily tired of his work and eager to decline a reelection; one the sexton—sexton of the church and substitute teacher of the school, sleepy from his day's toil and dusty from his fires, yet fully aware of the importance of the meeting—fully aware; one the pastor of the church, a good enough judge of men, yet no more able to make bricks without straw than the captives in Egypt—or for that matter a Moses without the forty years in Midian; and one 'our dear brother recently come among us,' Diotrephes. The last-named brother was put upon the nominating committee, overpersuaded by his eager associates in the pitiably customary way, nominated and unanimously elected by the casting vote of the secretary."

"You need tell me no more," said I, quietly. "I can follow his path. I had his brother in one of my churches. He was an English local preacher—all right

in England, say forty years ago, but not phenomenally a success as a supporter of a Yankee preacher. He practically owned the church and felt aggrieved—the ungodly used a shorter term—when he could not control its policy even down to the minute details. He knew how to write a sermon—so he told the pastor Monday morning when he, poor fellow, was sure that he himself didn't—and he had very decided views as to the lettering on the banner of the Junior Epworth League. It was he who loved the pastor to distraction for three months or more—up to vacation time; and it was he who told the elder quietly on his way home from the fourth Quarterly Conference that the people really needed a new man. 'He's all right as a pastor, so they say, but he doesn't feed us in his pulpit work.' It was he who offered the customary resolutions at the last meeting of the official board—who moved that the picture of their beloved pastor be hung in the vestry

of the church, and who suggested that the ladies present the pastor's wife with a bit of silver—'sterling, mind you,' said he, 'by all means let it be sterling.' "

"See here," said John, who seemed highly amused at this bit of news, "it seems to me that you have had no better success than I. How could you stand it? I couldn't."

"I didn't," said I. "I left before my full term was up."

"But you stayed three years? One was enough for me."

"Well," I replied, after a moment's hesitation, "I didn't believe I would find it any better anywhere else. Human nature is the same everywhere—even sanctified human nature. I take it you'll meet the same people in Maine that you meet in B——. Then, too, sometime in my second year it dawned upon me that I might be the fellow that was wrong—or, at least, that that was a good working hypothesis. I remember the time—I was

preaching a series of sermons on the thirteenth of Corinthians. Or, granted that I wasn't wrong—that my judgment was true, that he was a blight upon the church—had I and the rest of us a right to leave him? It was the meanest Jew in the chosen race whom the angel of God stayed by the longest. There is a prince of God in many a supplanter. My brother who deals in capsules and tablets likes a hard case. Why shouldn't I endure the foolishness and pettiness and apparent meanness of an undeveloped soul with as much patience as he dealing with a sluggish liver? I guess, John, there are two sides to every story. It might be profitable to hear what Diotrephes had to say of you. I'd give a good deal to have heard what my English local preacher said to my Dutch steward about me, or to have heard his reply."

I said much more than I had intended to say; possibly more than I honestly felt. I was seeking to lure Peter into the

conversation—to keep him musing till the fire burned and he also might speak.

"Yes," said he, emphatically and with something of annoyance, "you were most decidedly to blame, both of you. It was your duty to know how to reach men, yet according to your story you have fearfully failed. The Master wouldn't have acted as you have done—even I wouldn't. Why, I wouldn't have baptized one of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost if He had given promise of as little tact as you have shown."

"How did the Master reach you, Peter?" John was evidently thinking that Peter was a pretty difficult case to handle.

"I'll not tell you now," replied he. "Wait till we take breakfast some morning down on that bit of beach yonder; then I'll give you my experience. But I know that He reached me, and I know that He got hold of many others just like me. See here, Thomas, you said something about a doctor just now. Did you

ever call the Master the 'Great Physician'? Did you ever use His text—'He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted'? If so, didn't you say that no case was too peculiar or too difficult for Him—that no case need be fatal?"

"Yes," said I, "but that's His redemptive work you are talking of now—or, better, to keep to your thought, His remedial work. We are talking of His getting hold of the sinner—not of His treatment after He has him. I'm not thinking of what He could do for Peter, but of how He reached Simon."

"Well," said Peter, after a moment's thought, all of his temper now gone, "for one thing He didn't try to do it all Himself, the way you do. He made use of the rest of us. Why didn't you use your Dutch steward if you wanted to touch your local preacher? It was Andrew who found me—and I would do anything for him. He was my own brother, as true a man as ever lived, with a big brain and

a big heart. Some one told me in the Bible class—that young fellow home from college whom the Carpenter took such a liking to—that his name meant the 'Manly one,' and the quiet little woman who rarely said anything—the Carpenter and I called her 'Mary'—said that she was glad that it was Manliness personified that first followed Christ."

"Where was I?" said he, after a painful pause—John and I had not been quick enough to check him. It was fearfully sad to see him clutching after the threads of the other life.

"I don't know," said I, tamely, though I was following him closely enough.

"John found James," resumed Peter, "Philip found Nathanael, and going back to the first two disciples it was John the Baptist who found them. Speaking about John the Baptist," said he, after a moment, "there was a case for you. Do you remember how the Master managed him?"

"Why, yes," said John, "I think so. There are not many references to him. Certainly I know all that you can possibly allude to."

"No, you don't either," said Peter, bluntly, to the quiet delight of both of us—the old man was warming again to his thought. "There isn't a finer thing in the whole gospel story. You remember that John was in prison waiting his death; that the only things he could see were the prison bars and the stone walls of his dungeon; that he was alone; that he was gloriously innocent; that he had been true to his God and his Master from first to last. David's pit isn't to be named alongside of John's prison. No credit to David that he waited patiently for the Lord; all honor to John that he waited at all, patiently or impatiently. He got to doubting—to his glory be it said. He never would have done so if he hadn't before that put the Master in the highest possible place, and if he had not lived a

noble life himself. Jonah didn't doubt God in his prison—no, came to believe in Him only when he got there. But he was the smallest of the prophets and John the greatest of them. Jonah thought he could run away from God; John came preaching in the wilderness—'The kingdom of God is at hand.'"

"That's so," said I, quite tamely—I couldn't fully follow his thought; "John did seem to doubt the Master."

"Yes," said Peter, on the right track again, "and he frankly told the Master all about it. 'Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?'—came right to the point; made no explanation, offered no apology. Some of you fellows are afraid of offending the Ruler of the universe—that's the chilly term you use—and don't dare to be honest. 'I've begun to lose faith in you—to lose faith: I'm afraid you are not what you say you are,—that's practically what he told his two disciples to say to the Master. By the

way," said the old man slyly turning to John with that kindly look that gave such a beauty to his face, "did Diotrephes ever say anything like that to you? Did your Sunday school superintendent ever tell you that he thought you were a heretic, that you had missed your calling in life, that the better people of the church were grievously disappointed over your last Sunday's sermon?—that's the way Sunday school superintendents have. And did you stand on your dignity? Did you let the people who overheard—that Communicative Committee of the Ladies' Aid Society waiting to speak to you—did you let them know that you were answerable to God alone for your belief and conduct and not to—to Brother Diotrephes?—hard to get the 'Brother' out, but you did it. Well, if you did, the Master didn't. He seemed to love John all the more. He began to preach as He had never preached before; at any rate, that sermon was the only one He ever referred to, and He

seemed to think it the best thing He had done that day. 'Go tell John,' said He, 'that I've healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and preached to the poor.' He went through the whole program laid down for Him by Isaiah, and He did it immediately—that very hour. Never since the six days of Creation has so much of divine force been crowded into one hour as then; and He did it all to stand by a friend in the chill of his doubt. That's not the whole of it, either—nor the best of it. He said His kindest words after John's disciples had gone. He didn't talk against Diotrephes behind his back in the privacy of the leaders and stewards' meeting. 'Do you folks think John is a fickle man?' said He, as soon as He had sent the messengers away. 'Does it look as if the man whom you went out into the wilderness to see is like the grass bowing under every breeze? Not a bit of it; if you think from what you've heard that he wavers and is easily shaken you are mis-

taken. He's no reed. And do you men over there think that he was rather rough in his question—inconsiderate in his doubt, too blunt with Me—that he had no right to call Me to account as he did? Why, you forget who he is. John's no courtier, trained in guarded and gentle speech. His words may seem harsh, but his heart is all right.' Thomas, try that method with your next local preacher. It paid. John never wavered after that; never got out of prison either, but gave up his life to go home and welcome Stephen."

"You said a little while ago," I replied kindly seeking to get him to his main thought again, "that the Master did not do it all as we do—that He sent Andrew after you, and Philip after Nathanael, and John the Baptist after Andrew and the Beloved Disciple."

"Yes, that's true," said he, "though I never used the words 'Beloved Disciple'—It was His way very often, though I think

I may have made too much of it. It's equally certain that He sought men Himself. He was the only one of us who was genuinely on the lookout for an opportunity. It was He who saw Zaccheus up in the sycamore tree—and guessed the reason why he was there. It was He who hunted up that blind boy who had been cast out of the synagogue because he wouldn't curse the only one who had been his friend."

"I should think Matthew would have noticed Zaccheus—both of them were publicans," said John.

"So should I," replied Peter, "but he doesn't even mention him; it was left for Luke to do that. Still, what about the rest of us not noticing that blind boy? I can't see how we could be so careless. What a chance to preach the simple Gospel to a poor sinner with the certainty of success! He had been blessed by the Master with the gift of sight; he was hunting for an explanation of His power;

he had broken with his old associates—even his home had been shut against him; he was sad, he was alone. I see it all now, but not one of us saw it then. The truth of it is, we were busy with questions of theology those days, just as you and Thomas were the other evening when I wanted you to go out on the lake with me. 'Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?—that was what we bothered about. Great question, Thomas, great question. God forgive me! Why didn't I help the blind boy and consider the why and the wherefore afterward? We were a poor lot before Pentecost, anyway. It was left for the Master, I say, to notice the opportunity. 'Do you believe on the Son of God?' said He to the boy the day after He had healed him. 'Who is He that I might believe on Him?' 'Thou hast both seen Him'—seen Him—new word for that poor fellow—'and He it is that speaketh to thee.' No wonder that He won him—no wonder that the

boy immediately worshiped Him. Did you ever wonder why it was that Mary Magdalene got so near to the table at Simon's feast? Did you never think it peculiar that they didn't stop her? The truth of it is, they didn't notice her. Not one of them saw her till the Master said, 'Simon, seest thou this woman?' He saw her, for He was on the lookout for a Heaven-sent opportunity. You'll never do much good with your Dutch stewards, or English local preachers, or Diotrephes either, till you see your chance far better than I guess you ordinarily do."

"Still," said I, "I can't see that you were so much to blame in this last case. You had your eyes fixed on the Master. You can't chide a man who sees 'Jesus only.' Can you?" said I, as he hesitated. His back was turned toward me at the moment, or I wouldn't have repeated an unfortunate question; for if I had planned to anger the old man I couldn't have gone about it in a more successful way.

"Jesus only! Jesus only!" blurted he. "Why do you say that? Who gave you the right to see Jesus only when a sinner needs your help."

As he spoke he looked at me as he did on that first day when he said that I didn't act like Thomas. Then he looked at John, and in a moment seemed to collect himself; looked at me again, sadly this time, and then continued:

"You make me think of a person we had to preach for us once. He took for his text, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith.' That was his text—his sermon I don't remember; thank God, I don't. All that I can recall is, he twisted and turned and browbeat the truth till 'twas well-nigh dead. The Carpenter and I walked home together. Neither of us said much, till just as we were parting he spoke: 'I can't help it, and I don't want to either. I've got to keep looking at the other fellow too. You can go to that "second blessing" meeting

if you want to—I'm going to hunt up Jim. God knows he needs some one to cheer him, if what you told me about him is true. Seems to me that Gadarene wanted to go to a second blessing affair, but the Master sent him off to tell his friends about the first. The difference between him and me is, I don't want to go, and what is more I don't believe that I ought. The young fellow had a good text, but—.' Well," said Peter, "I went with him. You ought to have heard him sing, you ought to have heard him speak, you ought to have heard him pray. You ought to have seen him! God knows how I loved that man; God knows how I felt when they killed him; and I sometimes think if the Master were to come—"

He could say no more. John was nowhere to be seen. It was left for me to see the darkness settle back upon Peter. What had seemed to be sunrise was sunset. It was midnight with him soon enough—and in his midnight he slept.

CHAPTER V

A FEW days afterward we found ourselves face to face with the same topic. We had been altogether too sanguine regarding Peter's improvement. The "clouds had returned after the rain." He was Peter again sure enough. The lake was Galilee, John and I the friends of his imaginary life nineteen centuries before; the bit of modern speech, the elusive memory, the place, the dawning hope, the careless reference to the life of the day, failed for a time to irritate or even attract. He either did not hear or did not find anything in his poor clouded mind that suggested response. This, however, we did not know immediately; so that we were startled when first he joined in familiar conversation. Neither John nor I would pass through another such night of pain, or witness again a similar strug-

gle between reviving memory and weakening fancy, for all that the vacation trip might give us.

"It was not the rule of the Master," said John, quietly, "to let the devils tear a poor fellow before He cast them out, and we ought to be careful that this be not one of the exceptions."

It was Sunday afternoon, a chilly and a rainy one, and we were at close quarters in camp. The little hut was aglow with the light of the crackling blaze in the open fireplace, and we were stretched out at our ease enjoying the warmth and the absolute freedom from responsibility and care. John had just shown me for the third or fourth time a photograph of his wife and little one that he had tramped over the "carry" ten miles to the little post office to get. It was easy to see that his thoughts were not in Galilee, but rather very decidedly in the "State of Maine." "I don't deserve the love of such a woman," said he, emphatically. "She is well

named Mary; she is surely more like her than I am like John. She is a saint on earth if there ever was one. Peter, what do you think of that for a picture?" It was no use for him to appeal to me. He had sense enough finally to see that I was thinking of some one else. "Don't you think I've much to thank God for?"

"I should say you had," said Peter, promptly and heartily. "One could see at a glance—even a stranger—that she is a good woman; and at a second glance," added he, dryly, "that she is too good for you. That much even I can see—yes, could have seen a few years ago. I'm not so dull as I used to be."

"What do you mean," replied John, mechanically, smilingly evading Peter's sly thrust.

"Well, one day the Master," responded the old fisherman—we looked up quickly, John somewhat ashamed and I decidedly amazed. Peter was at it again and John was accountable for it. There was no

knowing now what old scar would be reopened or new wound be given. All that we could do would be to guide him, if possible, or at least keep out of his way. "One day the Master," repeated Peter, "went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, a few miles beyond the place where you got that picture, to get a little rest. He was tired out—genuinely used up. He couldn't get any sleep. People kept coming to Him at all hours, day and night. Nicodemus wasn't the only man who came to Him by night—not the only coward who wanted the cover of darkness. And He received them, every one of them. It was good recent history that He repeated when He said, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out'—good history as well as good prophecy. What's more, He had us to look after—a dozen thick-headed farmers and fishermen, incapable of a large thought or even ordinary stability. He told me that He had to pray for me; and even then I hadn't strength

enough to stand the ridicule of a servant girl. I don't believe the rest of us were any better, except possibly Thomas. John was shrewd enough to keep away from temptation. There is no knowing what would have happened if he had stood by the fire, too."

It was easy to see that the old man's interpretations of character were somewhat prejudiced. From the first—or, rather, after the first flash of anger—he had apparently liked me and disliked John. Dislike may be too strong a word—distrust may be better. He could place me, for he had a simple explanation that covered any slip on my part, but John the poor old fellow could not understand.

"As I was saying, the Master was tired out, and in desperation had gone away to rest, selecting a place where He wasn't known and where He thought He would be undisturbed. But He couldn't be hid. I could have been, so could you; John, very easily. I could have gone off a mile

or so and no one could have found me. I don't know how long it took even you men to get here. There were a thousand places where I could have been hidden, but not He. For He was bound to keep among the people. He wouldn't put up the bar of ordinary secrecy. He carried the whole worthless lot of us over there with Him, questioning and quarreling and boasting all along the way. One stone dropped into the lake out there would make a ripple even to the shore. Drop a dozen at once and you'll have a wave. He couldn't keep us still. Some fellow had to speak. I don't know who it was. I rather think it was the man who opened his house to Him. Anyway, I couldn't have blamed him much if he had —Old Abraham got it put into the Bible for all time that he entertained an angel or two!—Maybe it was the poor fellow who had just got his sight. You remember, don't you, that our Lord told Bartimeus to 'go his way,' and that right

after that glorious new-found freedom 'he followed Jesus in the way'? Well, I rather think at times it was one of these poor fellows who hung around the Master, though He tried to send them home, who gave his testimony to the power of Jesus Christ. Then, too, there was the woman's search. What could He do with that? Her little girl was sick, and she had heard that He was somewhere in the neighborhood—He, the only one on God Almighty's footstool who could work a cure. If it's woman's nature to sweep a house to find a ten-cent piece, I guess it's equally true that she will search a town to find the Saviour of her child. Don't you think so, John? What about your Mary and that baby she's got against her cheek? I think," continued he, not waiting for an answer, "that I was speaking about seeing the good in people, wasn't I?"

"Why, yes," said I, "that picture seems to have started that thought."

I looked at John as I spoke. He too had noticed that Peter had recovered himself and was back again on the main track of his thought without any guidance from either one of us.

"The Master saw at a glance what she was, though he didn't act as if He did. 'I can't help you,' said He. 'It isn't right to take the children's bread and give it to dogs.' Fact, that was His word—dogs! Strange speech for Him—and to a woman, too. So two or three of us thought, and yet we were so fearfully small that we were glad of it. 'I can't give my bread to dogs.' You should have seen the woman when He was speaking. She looked dazed at first, then broken-hearted, then submissive. 'That's so, Sir,' said she, 'the dogs have the crumbs: that's all they have a right to get. I suppose I've had my share already.' Say, Thomas—Thomas—that was too much for me; even Judas twisted a bit under that. 'I've had the crumbs; I can't ask

for bread.' That was all that she said. But it wasn't all the Master said—not a bit of it! He gave her one big-hearted look, and told her to get right away home, and she'd find her daughter well again. In one moment He had broken all of His foreordained plans for a limited atonement because of the patient loyalty of one poor woman. She was content to take a crumb if He said so, and He gave her a loaf. Then as she went her way He said to the rest of us, gaping at the whole thing in wide-open astonishment, 'I haven't seen such faith, no, not in Israel.' Since that time I have learned to read character—not by the dress, nor Jewish cast of features, nor by anything I can name—and I don't often make a mistake. Is it any wonder, then, that He knew how to reach people? By the way, isn't that what we were talking about the other day? Wasn't I saying something about the habits of the Master?"

"I think so," said I, hesitatingly, fear-

ful that I might overdo my curiosity again. "I believe that you said that the Master always saw His opportunity where the rest of us so frequently fail."

"Yes," replied Peter, back where we wanted him and with no suggestion of overexcitement—"He knew how to read human nature. He saw a man as he was; and He always saw a man at his best, too. Take the case of Zaccheus. Zaccheus was a publican, a miserable tax collector, an assessor, too. Besides, he was a sinner. Yet Jesus saw something in him that led Him to say, 'He also is a Son of Abraham.' Take that poor Galilean whose son was sick—I mean the one we met at the foot of the Holy Mount. The poor fellow wanted to believe, but he couldn't. If he could, he knew that his son would be cured in a moment; if he could not, he had no reason to look for any kind of a blessing. What did the Master do? He took the man at his prayer, not his profession. He saw just

what the man wanted to be, and that was imputed to him for character. Old Solomon had it right when he said, 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' No wonder He draws all men unto Him. Thanks to His name!

"Then, too, He was mighty quick about it. Take this Galilean's prayer. There are only three or four words in it, but it did the work. It was long enough for Him to see the heart beneath it. It was only a scarlet thread that was needed to reveal to the spies the home and heart of Rahab. I guess the Lord Jesus Christ is as quick to see as those poor fellows who blew the rams' horns. All of the prayers that are good for anything are short ones. Look at the prayer of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' or that prayer I prayed when I lost my footing out on this lake, 'Lord, save me, or I perish,' or the prayer of the prodigal, 'I am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired

servants.' That was the prayer he planned to say, but even that was too long, for the father broke in right in the midst of it; he wouldn't let him say anything about being a 'hired servant.' Somehow or other that sort of petition is always out of place for one of the sons of God. All that the poor father wanted was to know that his boy was sorry—and it doesn't take many words to let that be known."

"What you say is all true," said I, guardedly, "but it doesn't fully answer my question about our Lord's method of dealing with men. You say that He saw His opportunity and saw it right off, but you don't tell us how He used His opportunity."

"I know what you mean," replied Peter. "I have seen it all along, but I can't keep to my text as you fellows do. But give me time. Have as much patience in catching my thought, will you, as you showed in landing that trout the other

day. If there ever was a man of tact or rare common sense, it was the Master. He saw the fish, He saw His chance, and He knew what bait to use."

"So He varied His method, did He?"

"Of course," replied Peter, chafing a bit at my interruption. "For one thing, He never pestered the life out of the fellow He was talking with."

It was John's turn now to glance warningly at me, and my turn to withdraw as gracefully as I could.

"All right, Peter, I beg your pardon. Go ahead in your own way. I guess I was too eager; that's all."

"He won Zaccheus," continued Peter, perfectly mollified, "by letting him show Him a favor—by receiving rather than giving. He broke my heart by a look; a word would have brought an answer, I guess, for I was in a swearing mood just then. He rebuked me by making me promise loyalty to Him three times running. He won Mary by His gentle cour-

tesy. Of course she didn't plan to wash His feet with her tears, any more than Simon planned to wash them at all. Yet He assumed that she did. So, Mary of Bethany. She had no thought of anointing Him for His burial. They wouldn't have given Him a feast if they had had any idea of His death. The two things don't go together. All that Mary intended to do was to imitate what the other Mary had done. I guess she meant to show to her Lord that Mary His friend in the home at Bethany could do as much for Him as Mary the sinner in the home of Simon the Pharisee. That seems to me to be good sense, though I never heard Him say anything about it.

"He never took anyone at a disadvantage. That's why He wrote on the ground that day when the sinning woman was brought before Him. He gave her time to collect herself before He spoke to her; and her accusers took advantage of it. If it hadn't been for her

those old hypocrites wouldn't have gotten off so easily—so I think. He was a hard hitter at times"—and the old man chuckled as he said it as if he were glad of it—"a hard hitter. 'Generation of vipers. Sons of the devil! Whited sepulchers! Liars!' He could use plain speech when He wanted to do so. I'm mighty glad He did. Seems wrong to hate the devil whom you've not seen, and not hate the devil whom you see."

"Shouldn't you love your enemies?" said I, quite tamely. I saw that he looked for some sort of reply.

"Yes," said the old man, "that's the aim. Still I thought of what John once said about love; and I've found that a man can't love much if he can't hate too. Yet," said he, quickly, gladly recovering his old position, "He could say things that I couldn't; for He knew what He was talking about. If He called a man a hypocrite it was because he was one; if I do, the chances are that I have made a

mistake. But I won't say any more about this now. I guess I've said too much as it is. The Master never took a man at a disadvantage, nor let one take himself at a disadvantage either. He always sided with a man's better nature against his poorer. He always helped Peter in his fight with Simon," said he, smiling gently. "Do you remember how He stood by Mary at the tomb of Lazarus? You recall that He said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and that He added, 'Believest thou this?' You remember that she tried to answer but couldn't?"

"Why, no," said John.

"Well," said Peter, "that's the case, just the same. 'Yea, Lord,' said Mary, 'I believe that thou art the Christ.' She couldn't say more than that, though she mightily wanted to do so. He never stood in the way of a friend. Do you remember why He came to leave Judea?

"Because of John the Baptist?"

"Yes," said Peter, with some sur-

prise—he had not found me as a rule ready with an answer—"Yes, when the Lord found that the Pharisees were saying that He was baptizing more disciples than John He took Himself out of the way. It was all right enough for John to talk about his decreasing while the Master increased—the Master had something to say about that, too.

"Wait a minute," said he to John, "a word more. He never saved Himself—never preached only once on Sunday for fear He might die fifteen minutes before His time if He preached twice. He gave, gave, gave all the time. Paul meant right when he said, 'He pleased not Himself,' but he overlooked the word of Christ, 'It's more blessed to give than to receive.' If that is true—and I know 'tis—He wasn't the Man of Sorrows only—but the Man of Holy Happiness."

Involuntarily, John moved again; the old man saw him, but adroitly threw upon us the burden of the length of the conver-

sation. "He would have talked with you men as long as you wanted Him to do so—and that is saying a good deal. I'm getting tired."

"Peter," said I, laughingly, "we can take a gentle hint as kindly as you give it. You men go to bed. I'll fix the fire for the night. Don't you bother about breakfast, John, it's my turn. Good night."

In a few moments both of them were sound asleep; and after a word of prayer and a song of thanksgiving out under the stars—for the storm had ceased—I followed them, and a memorable day was ended.

CHAPTER VI

"So you would be willing to change places with him, would you?—be glad to live in Galilee rather than B——; to catch fish instead of men; to mend nets, to build huts, and dream of days you never knew?"

"Quite likely," said I, "just about as much as you would. You're too fast, John. You jump at conclusions too quickly. Do you think I'd be taking this long tramp if I were absolutely daft. I rather guess there is something of the modern in me still. No! No! I'm as eager to get a letter from home and to hear from the church I've left as I would be if I'd never seen Galilee—maybe more so. I'm as eager to get my mail as you were to get that photograph you showed me yesterday, and that's saying a good deal."

"I suppose so," said John, laughingly; "still I can't see what you find to joke about in an old married man's looking at the picture of his wife."

"Nor I—that is, not now. I hope to get one of mine."

We entered the little post office as we spoke and made inquiries for our mail, and in a moment found ample payment for a walk of ten miles. True, I didn't receive any picture, but I did get news of the good health of my loved ones and the prayers and good wishes of a loyal church; and I got it in the loving letter of my wife. Besides, inclosed in her letter I found a little scrawl from one of the children—his first attempt at letter writing—with its misspelled words, its grave information that he had bumped his head, or that baby had cut another tooth, its blot for a kiss (a blot first, the thought of the kiss afterward: I could see it all—the tears, the chubby fists digging at the fountain of ready supply, the

kiss of the mother and the pious bit of domestic diplomacy)—I say I found ample payment for the ten miles' tramp over the hills. So did John. He, too, had heard again from home. "Lucky woman," thought I, as I saw him read his letter from Mary, "to have that man for a husband—the personification of manly purity or pure manliness, I could not tell which; a man in face and form and unconscious carriage, and a saint in the eyes that knew no guile and the smile that bade the soul flush the face with grace and glory."

We said very little for the first mile or so of the journey back to camp; indeed, I don't think that I would have spoken at all if John had not taken up the conversation of the morning where we had left it.

"You're all right," said he. "There's no danger. Insanity isn't contagious. Even if it were, I guess you've got your preventive. How many pages did she

write you this time? Have you committed them to memory already? Wake up, old fellow. You forget who you are. You are not the fond lover, nor the reverend doctor of divinity. You are Thomas. See that road? That's the border of Tyre and Sidon. That little village across the valley? That's Cana. Your humble servant? He's John. He looks amazingly like a country dominie, but he isn't. He's John. O Thomas, Thomas, that letter did me a heap of good," and he beamed upon me as he spoke even as my little boy smiles up into the face of his mother.

"John," said I, abruptly, "I don't take so much stock in that glorious doctrine of total depravity as once I did."

"What! What's that!" answered he, looking at me quizzically for a moment and then pealing out his laughter again and again. "Guess you're crazy, after all. Thought 'twas Galilee, but you are going back to Paradise—and to Paradise

before the fall, too. What started you off on that tack?"

"No matter," said I, laughing quite as heartily in return. "Don't know as I know, for sure. Your face, I guess, and my little boy's letter. There's a lot of good in this old world still. Things haven't gone to everlasting ruin just yet, and never will. Old Adam died, and outside of theology stays dead, and I for one don't care to disturb him. He died, but the Master lives, and while He lives asserts His power. What's more, one of the first things He did when He came up out of the grave was to knock off the shackles from poor human nature. My little boy is a saint, by the grace of the living God, and I reckon you're sanctified, too. Why not give the living a chance in our theology as well as the dead. The first Adam was a living spirit, the second Adam a life-giving one. Poor old Peter's Carpenter wasn't the Lord Jesus Christ back in visible life again, but he

very easily might have been so; and Peter, crazy as he is, is lucky to think so. No, I don't mean just that," I added, as John suddenly sobered from his laughter to the alertness of the critic—"no, not just that—yet I intend to speak to you just as freely as I want to—not just that; I don't mean that error is better than truth even for a crazy man, but that a perverted truth that lives is better than a well-proved truth that's dead. I sometimes think that the old fisherman got more from the humble man who evidently knew well the presence and spirit of his Lord than many of us from the invisible Saviour Himself. By the way, John, that is all that I meant to say this morning."

"I believe I understand you," said he, quietly.

"The older I get," I continued, "the more I feel that I need to know Him, and to grasp normally and spontaneously and tenaciously the fact of His companionship and personal interest—not to know more

about Him. I'm not yearning just now for a series of lectures on the creed. I've given one or two myself dry enough to impair the insurance on my church. But to know Him—to believe that He is near when I'm digging at a sermon as well as when I'm preaching it—when I'm sidetracked in the chitchat of empty conversation as well as when I'm making a pastoral call that amounts to something. That's what I want. I believe it—yes, I believe it; but I want to get a better hold upon it. I want to know Him, John, know Him: not as the cranks do, nor as the spiritual babes—the converts who lecture hoary-headed saints fifteen minutes after they've found the Lord; not as the pietists know Him, but as men out in the world, dusty from its streets, soiled by the touch of sin, deafened by its cries and groans, wearied by its burdens—as such men know Him—as you know Him—or, if you will, as Peter knew his country Carpenter."

"Well, don't you?" said John.

"No," I replied, "I do not. Mind you, John: one word right here. I take Him as my Saviour, and have no doubt that He accepts me. That much I mark down as sure. Still there is much that I haven't received yet."

"Wait a moment," said I, interrupting him in some well-meant words about a second blessing. "I am pretty well assured by this time that the favor of God which I seek does not come through believing more or believing less, or through readjusting in true proportions the various tenets of one's creed. Indeed, I'm sure that I am called neither to diagnose, nor prescribe, nor tell intelligently the next sick man I meet what has been the matter; all I have to do is to get before God and await His work—provided He sees I'm worth it, and thinks I can serve Him better as a saint fully insured than one seeking such favor. Achan fought all right when trying to get into Canaan;

he failed only when he reached the Promised Land."

"That last sounds like Peter," interrupted John, a kindly smile brightening for a moment his face, now quite sober, if not sad.

"I don't intend," I concluded, "to crawl around in the dust, nor hunt after a foe to wrestle with, nor weep for the sake of weeping. Yet some of you fellows have found something I'd do a lot to get. In the meantime, I am going about my business, believing that My Lord goes about His too. I'd like to see Him, though, as Peter does."

"Well, isn't he helping you?" said John, who felt that he had to say something.

"Yes, I never for one moment said that He wasn't, but not"—"I mean," said John, breaking in upon me—"I mean isn't Peter helping you—Peter, not the Master. Do give me credit for what little sense I have."

"Yes," said I, "yes, still not as much as he helped you."

"Yet he makes you feel your need, you say. Isn't that a help?"

"So far, so good; possibly it is a greater aid than I have considered it to be. It's true that since I came to Galilee my need of a better sight of my Master has been intensified, and this strange old fisherman is largely responsible for it."

"Thank God then for that. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' "

"Yes," said I, dryly, "that's good Scripture."

I suppose that John saw that he could not help me, for he said nothing in reply to my ungenerous answer. I saw that I had worried him, and I knew that he felt he was not equal to the occasion. Very frequently, I have found, when a dominie

quotes Scripture it's a confession of mental weakness, however it may testify to his faith or biblical learning. It is inability and not piety that throws one on the word of God, and the man knows it; and some of those who hear him know it, too.

We had been resting some time on the bank of a little brook when next he spoke.

"Did I ever tell you about the death of my little boy?" said he, quietly, nervously crushing a belated wild flower in his hand as he looked toward me for an answer. "Did I ever tell you what I found when I came home from my first trip up here in the woods?"

"You wrote me, you remember," I replied.

"Yes, I wrote you the bare facts, that was all. I believe Mary wrote more fully to Martha; you probably saw her letter, too."

"Yes," said I, heartily, "you had our deepest sympathy and our prayers." I

looked at him wonderingly, not catching the clew to his thought, at the same time thinking of the little letter I had in my pocket—the announcement of the bump, the blot, the baby's tooth.

After a pause of a minute or two he told me the story of the darkness of his home all over again—slowly at first, painfully, piteously, simply, loyally; loyal to his friend and loyal to his God, his very present help in the time of his trouble. He told as at times I had heard he preached, in words that had been warmed through and through in the very chimney corner of his heart. He told it to help me, though it hurt him, with an intensity that comes to one who feels that he must do something, for the occasion is great, though he can do but little, and with the power of one who talks while the heart prays, and who deals with truth that the angels of God would give everything to handle. Said Peter to me once, "They'd swap an archangels' chorus for a word

like that." He took of the things of Christ as they had touched his heart and home, and by the aid of God's Holy Spirit revealed them unto me.

It is twenty years since that day—twenty long years, too. One of those years, as I look back upon it, seems to have been ten; and one month, a score of months. Yet I could recall—as I have already done in many other instances—all that he said, practically word for word. Still, there's no need that I do so, and I have no heart to undertake it.

"That was the night," said he, in conclusion, "when I saw my God as never before; and He has never left me, though at times I see Him through my tears," added he, with one of those dry sobs that hurt so. "Simon Peter helped me, 'tis true, when I was with him in his camp, but the greater work the Lord Jesus Christ did Himself. There's a spot in one of my old homes that I call Peniel, for there I saw my God face to face—and

lived," he added, simply, trying to smile. Of course we said very little after that. I had much to think about, and John too much.

We found Peter awaiting our return, somewhat impatient but hearty with his welcome. "I wondered," said he, "what had become of you. Don't you do as the others have done. Don't leave me. I need you. Come," said he, "your dinner is ready."

CHAPTER VII

"Do you generally speak of the Saviour as 'the Shepherd'?" said I to Simon Peter. I referred to the terms used by him in the prayer that was just ended. It was evening, the evening following the walk over the hills for the mail, and the old fisherman had taken his turn in leading in the simple worship of the day.

"No," said he, somewhat hesitatingly, "I don't know that I do. Still I like to. It's a mighty attractive word." As he spoke he reached for the New Testament, the well-worn copy he had used so faithfully for years, and turning to the gospel of John read again the lesson of the Good Shepherd. It was an old story, familiar as its counterpart in the twenty-third psalm, and yet I was compelled to listen as though I had never heard it. Peter's voice would have held me, if nothing

else—a rich full tone, musical as the murmur of the majestic forest behind us, and as suggestive of depth, too; tremulous under an emotion that gave a wave to his words though it did not break their surface, as the ocean rolls and swells, it may be in the sunlight and when touched only by the gentle evening breeze, because of yesterday's storm. I had to listen. Indeed, the familiarity of the story was a help instead of a hindrance. It made no difference if I did know what was coming, I listened as if to new truth, or rather to truth with which I was already partly acquainted; for the second meeting with a friend is ever more pleasurable than the first, the old hymns of the faith, or the words of "Common Prayer" sanctified by holy usage through the generations, dearer every time you meet them even down to death. "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep," read Peter. "To him the porter openeth. . . . A stranger will they not follow, but

will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Then the old man prayed again, reverently, but with wonderful freedom; prayed for John, for me, for himself; prayed especially for the coming of Christ's kingdom on earth, that the God of grace who had called us to eternal glory by His Son Jesus Christ might make us perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us; that the chief Shepherd might hasten His coming and grant to each one of us a crown of glory that could not fade away; prayed as if he knew the mind of Christ, and knew, too, the mind of each one of the chosen circle that followed Him.

He ceased as abruptly as he began, and turning directly toward me, his fine old face still aglow under the inspiration that had given form to his prayer, he said: "Do you know, Thomas, why so many men fail to follow the Master? why so few join the church? Because," added he, not waiting for my tardy and prob-

ably inappropriate answer, "because of your life and mine, or our form of teaching, life and doctrine, both; yours, too, John"—he could not miss the chance to show his unfounded petty dislike, about the only evidence we would get for days that his mind was not right—"because of the conduct of all of us. We bring a Stranger to the sheepfold, not the Shepherd, and the porter of the human heart won't let him in. He hasn't the shepherd's rod and staff; he hasn't the shepherd's manner; he hasn't the Master's voice, nor His face, and the hand that knocks hasn't the print of the Roman nails. The porter is looking for the shepherd, not the hireling. Let the shepherd of the sheep appear, 'to him the porter openeth.' 'Thank God,' say I time and time again when I see a stranger sent, through your words or mine—for I guess we are all alike—even to the very door of the sheepfold, 'Thank God for the porter at the gate.' When we present Christ

as He is—not as we think He ought to be, not as we have seen Him once or twice—why, I saw the Master asleep out yonder in a storm once, but I talk of a Master very decidedly awake—when we do that the door of the sinner's heart will be swung wide open. 'Tis the porter's business not only to let the shepherd in, but to keep the stranger out."

"I tell you, Thomas," said the old man, after a moment's pause, "the Master showed His trust in mankind from the first to the last. I know I've said this before, but now I'm at it I won't hesitate to say it again. He knows the way to the heart of each one of us, for He enters by the door. He knows His sheep, for He calls them by name, and He knows there's something in human nature that's waiting His coming, for He speaks of the porter. He believed that there was a faithful servant at the door even before the shepherd could enter. And I for one," said he, "believe He was right."

"So do I, Peter," said I; "with all my heart I believe as you do." And as I spoke I thought of the tramp back over the hills that afternoon with John, of our talk about the dusty dogma of depravity, of the theology that clusters all around Christ, that throngs him but never touches him; of the little fellow who had sent his kiss in the letter I carried near my heart, and of the baby who had sent no word to John—that is, none that John knew as such; and of the victory early one glorious morning while it was yet dark at the new-made grave of Joseph of Arimathea, where the Master met Sin and the Devil, and all the Devil's kin, and laid them low in a death that knew no resurrection. I thought of all this and felt that for nineteen hundred years at least the porter could be trusted.

"Now you are back again," said Peter, dryly, a moment or two later, "I'll repeat what I've been saying to John. Every one of us is naturally a Christian from the

day of his birth—a struggling Christian, if you will, but a Christian nevertheless—fighting the devil from the moment he comes in childish grief to ask forgiveness of his mother to the last hour of life this side the grave—from the first step of his baby feet in his father's home to the last one in the solitary journey through the valley of the shadow of death. He is ever a fighter, sometimes losing and sometimes winning, still by nature a soldier in the army of the Lord. I have no intention of making in my theology the first Adam stronger in his power to damn than the second in His power to save. When it comes to a test between the two, I know who wins, and I'm loyal enough to Him to believe that the test has been made. Goliath had to taunt David to get him out of the tent of Saul—not so with David's greater Son. For Him no invitation was needed, no cry from the gates of hell, to get Him to leap the battlements of glory and rush to the rescue. That's

about the way," said Peter, with growing excitement, "that the Carpenter used to put it."

"That's so," said John, quickly, "I agree with both of you. Let me tell you, Peter, what I was telling Thomas a little while ago." And the poor fellow to save Simon from the shock we dreaded, knowing instinctively that his rising emotion must be met by a stronger one equally genuine, repeated with painful detail the story of the death of his little boy. "That little fellow was fit for heaven," added he. "The moment he came into life two stood seeking an entrance into his baby heart, yet the Master was the only one who got in. The truth of it is"—he was speaking steadily now—"we are all backsliders when we fall into sin."

"Yes," said I, quickly, "and another truth is, there are some who never backslide."

"Yes," assented John, somewhat timidly, "though I'd like to take counsel with

caution a bit before putting that on paper. Still I believe it—or, better, I can't say now why I shouldn't believe it. There comes the time when the child sheltered in a Christian home and trained in the atmosphere of prayer wakes up to the fact of what he has been and is—not what he may be; that will be the difference between your boy's 'conversion' and that of the drunken loafer, it may be, whom we saw to-day down on the clearing. Wait a moment, both of you," continued John, "I must say a word or two more, then I'm through. I didn't get this originally out of the Bible, nor from my inherited creed, though I believe it to be in both now. I got it from my child. Time and time again the Master calls a little child and sets him right in the center of a home—right 'in the midst of the disciples,' if you please—and through him teaches the old lesson of simplicity, 'Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' There

were hours when I had to read the book of innocent childhood—when I could read nothing else. We were together often, my little boy and I, and I used to talk with him very freely, partly that I might hear his quaint little speech and his odd ways of putting his thought, and partly, after a time, that I might learn something. It dawned upon me that a little child might lead me. I learned among other things what our Lord meant when He taught His disciples as they prayed to say 'Our Father.' Fact, I never knew what that word meant till one night I heard my little boy call me in a troubled dream. I think I learned what love was—I'm sure I learned the meaning of faith. Indeed, he was a whole theological seminary for me," he added, with nervous laughter, in which we were glad to join.

"So," he continued, after a moment or two of thought to see whence he had started, "to get back to where we were,

I learned from him a few lessons in human nature. I found out that he was instinctively good. Mind you, he made his many mistakes; he seemed at times to be mischief incarnate. He told me a lie once or twice, but he did it ignorantly in unbelief, as Paul says. He quarreled with his playmates right royally at times, but told me once that they all had been holding a board meeting. He cried lustily, he sulked and pouted all too frequently, yet he was instinctively good—or, if you don't like the word 'instinct'" (he misinterpreted my silence: I was quiet for other reasons than criticism), "the grace of God was with him; or, as Peter would tell us, the porter cared for the lambs while the shepherd was out seeking pasturage. If you don't accept this, how do you account for his spontaneous tenderness, the second kiss at night, the flooding of the tears in sympathy when his mother hurt herself one day, or the sob in remorse such as a well-seasoned

saint who slips knows nothing of? Yes, indeed, Peter, 'to him the porter openeth.' Human nature isn't so wretchedly depraved as we say it is. I think," concluded he, "when I get home I'll preach a sermon on 'The Faithful but Unrecognized Servant; or, the Porter of the Sheepfold.' How would that do?"

"How did it happen, John," said I, not answering his question, "that you didn't speak this way this afternoon? I had no idea that we were so nearly agreed."

"I don't know," he replied. "I think I was in no mood for it. 'Twas the first time I had opened the door to the nursery for months, and I couldn't easily get back to my study. I could have talked about my little boy for hours, but I had no taste to analyze or group together any conclusions I had formed. Still I didn't mean to mislead you"—this last with that simple honesty that made all who knew him love him for the noble man that he was.

"Peter," said he, suddenly, "I've been telling Thomas how happy I have been these years since last we were together—how real the Master is to me, how you helped me into the light of a great joy—and I've been praying that he might know it, too. Can't you help me?"

I am very sure that John did not deserve the treatment that this question received—I mean from Peter. I am decidedly sure that there was no ingratitude on my part, or resentment of the personal turn the conversation was taking. Possibly I was a bit embarrassed, but only for a moment, for I had no reason to conceal anything from either one of them. "Can't you help me? Can't you help me? Seems to me you put that the wrong way! I didn't know that you were managing this affair, Thomas," said he, speaking more quietly, "don't persuade yourself that John is the only one who does any praying up here in Galilee. I don't spend all my time fishing"—and

his lip quivered as he said this. "I need no one to tell me of my duty toward you, nor my privilege either." Then, turning away, he said, somewhat testily, "John, what do you want me to pray for?"

"That Thomas may find Christ," replied he, readily and simply—either not noticing or paying no heed to his annoyance—"that he may come to Him as he never came before."

"I don't understand you," said Peter. "Who's to do the coming? It looks from your words as if you meant that Thomas was to come to Christ."

"Why, that's what I do mean."

"Well, you're wrong. You have twisted the whole thing about. I know as well as you do that for a while the Master used to put it that way—that He said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest'—but I also know that from the moment He really entered the shadow of His cross, from the moment of the first promise of the Comforter, up to

the present time, the form of His appeal has changed. 'If any man love me,' said He on the night when He was betrayed, 'he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. And when the Comforter is come' (the old man was now speaking even more vigorously, for he was reading from his one book), whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me;' Heaven the place He leaves, your heart His destination, Jesus Christ the one interested, the nature of the Lord His message. There's your sermon, if you want it—'whom I will send unto you'—unto you, Thomas, right where you are: you needn't take a step; your part in the work is of another nature. God Almighty is not limiting Himself in these days to the slow motion of even the best walker among us! He moves Himself—even David knew centuries ago that He did fly upon the wings of the wind. Don't

you bother about going to Him. 'Behold,' said the Master, 'I stand at the door and knock. If any man open unto me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.' The only steps you have to take are to your door; and the average man when he thinks that the King is coming to see him is not far away from that."

"John," added he, now very kindly, "I reckon you must change the form of your prayer. I don't think the words amount to much, still they're good for something, and I'd have them right if I could. I'd ask the Shepherd to come back once more to the sheepfold. I'd tell Him that there are many thieves and robbers seeking to get in, and the porter is worried and wants to turn the care over to the Shepherd. I'd say all this to the Shepherd, and I'd say something to Thomas. It isn't the Master only who needs to have prayers to move Him—though even that I cannot believe to be necessary—it is the man who must be sought as well.

Are you fully ready to open the door, Thomas? Well, then wait. Be on the watch, and in His own good time He will come. He waits till 'tis good grazing time before He comes to bring out the sheep. He knows when to come. Keep still and watch; there's nothing else you can do."

CHAPTER VIII

It is difficult for me as I recall the events of our stay with Peter to place every scene in its right setting or give the minute details of any conversation. It may be possible—nay, too probable—that some of Peter's words as found in this record were not his at all, but rather my own or John's. I am sure that I do the old fisherman injustice in my failure to show him as he really was in his quaint originality and positive worth. I do myself equal injustice—without any power to correct myself—in presenting him as so supremely our teacher. All I intend to say is this: his quaint thought was strangely timely and suggestive. Many of his ideas we afterward worked out to limits that he would not have thought possible. Also, I do not know that I lived so much in the shade those days as I

have represented myself to have been. I was like the majority of Christian people, conscious that I was climbing toward God and glory, yet painfully aware of the fact that I made slower progress than one "called to be a saint" should make. My aim and my attitude were all right, but not my Christian attainment. I never had the courage to apply Paul's figure of the stadium and the athlete's strain to anything in my life or my endeavor. Indeed, Paul on the Mediterranean in a storm with four anchors cast from the stern of his ill-fated vessel, waiting for day, and at his wit's end like the rest of the company, were it not for the heavenly vision granted at midnight, suited my case better than Paul at Philippi with every weight cast off running the race for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But I loved the Lord. He was my Master. I do not think that there was any irrational fervor in my words when I said so day after day as I

preached Christ to the people, and certainly no hypocrisy. I am not aware that my ecstasy or enthusiasm—for I knew even this blessed state at times—ever failed to take counsel with good sober thought; and I cannot recall that I was ever dangerously enamored of a phrase or feeling, or appropriated even for a novelty the rich expression of some other son of God as a covering for my weak or dismal thought. No, I loved the Lord—that was sure; yet was well convinced that John had gotten more from Him, certainly Peter, than I as yet knew.

So thought I one day as I climbed a little hill to the northeast of the lake in search of the Master's secret place of prayer. With deep mysteriousness Peter had called me aside a few hours before and had told me just where I could find it. He did not advise me to go—that was more than even he would directly suggest—still his intent was as clear as if he had put his thought into words. John

had smilingly added, when I told him what Peter had done, that evidently the old man wanted me to go there alone. So, as I have said, I found myself alone, as night was entering the valley below me, on the spot where Peter firmly believed the Master was just after He had fed the five thousand. I remember that I was asking myself the question whether there was any irreverence in my dealing with the life of Christ as I had done—whether this confounding some unknown carpenter of some nameless town with the Lord of all ages was not even more than a crazy man should be allowed to do, to say nothing of two men who were supposed to be sane as well as saintly. I remember that I was struggling with the delicate question as to the line where familiar fellowship ended and culpable irreverence began. "Yet," thought I, indignantly answering my own criticism, "there is no irreverence in Peter; and as for myself, I'm sure I worship the Lord with a deeper

sincerity every day I spend in this modern Galilee. I seem to be getting reality, and that's what I want. My Lord in modern dress, at modern work, with the difficulties of my own day, and with a love for men just like myself—even if I know that the Carpenter was a carpenter only and Simon a poor beclouded sufferer—my Lord as Peter has led me to see Him seems more and more a glorious present reality. Then," added I, turning questioner again, "why need a man be so fearfully afraid of treating the Redeemer as a Friend, with whom, if you will, you've the right to take liberties? Why should he forget that the audacious members of the Twelve—the men who spoiled many a period in His matchless sermons by their clumsy inadvertent questions—who rushed in to interrupt both His praise and prayer, were the men whom He especially favored and loved? Why not assume that He loves reality too? Why need I bear the name of Thomas and not act as

Thomas would act; or, better, why not in the spirit of Thomas be myself and give words to my audacious doubt and preference to any form of fiction or fable that brings the Master nearer me? Why need I hesitate to get a lesson from a Christlike carpenter of my own day who in all probability walked pretty near to the path the Master would have chosen had He humbled Himself to a life of the carpenter's limitations and surroundings and imperfect revelation of God's will? Why flush and stammer and bow and cross yourself and walk awkwardly as before some earthly monarch; or why pore over the old pages of the Mosaic law or the records of a priesthood of other days to find out how to act? Why look upon the church as if it were the temple, or the temple as if it were not forever in ruins; why forget that the veil was rent in twain and the humblest could see the Holy of Holies? Why not remember that we are the sons of God already in the kingdom;

why not have the sense to know that 'tis not the word nor the form, but the heart behind it all, that the Master looks at? Say anything," said I, bluntly, "provided you are honest. Drop all forms, or break them—it makes no difference. What Christ seeks is just that treatment Peter now gives to his carpenter, and what the day laborer of Maine was to Simon surnamed Peter my Master is to be to me. May God pardon me my irreverence," I cried, "if indeed it be such, but may He also know that it is just now the only garment my love can wear with any comfort. I could dress it up in the conventional clothing of the saint behind the chancel rail, yet it would not be such a sturdy, manly love as it is in the rougher dress of a man among men. O Thou Shepherd of the Sheep," I added, reverting to the thought of a few days before, "enter Thou Thy sheepfold. Find here a faithful porter at the gate and a waiting flock. I am ready to be led out by Thee,

yet dare not venture one step except under Thy guidance."

It might, I presume, be well for me to re-read what I have written and recast some of its thought; yet it is as it should be. No man thinks in the method of the mathematician with his higher problems, or as the preacher who saves his "thirdly" for the climax. No man can analyze his prayers with any satisfaction or furnish a pleasing chart to the curious of the course of his thinking. I thought as a worried, beclouded, yet loyal man might well have thought, and in due season I was not disappointed.

I remember that I turned back from my vantage point on a cliff jutting out from the foliage that softened the outline of the mountain even to its very summit, and looked down upon the lake. Well might it have been taken for Galilee even by a sane man, so far as its appearance was concerned. It was remarkably like it in size and shape. It nestled in the hills. It

reflected as blue a sky; it resented as angrily the rough touch of the storm, and forgot as capriciously the trust of its friends. "Over there," thought I, "the Master once saw us toiling when the wind was contrary, and in the fourth watch of the night came walking on the waves; down on yonder beach He met the Seven in the misty dawn of one of those glorious resurrection days of rarest privilege; out there Peter walked the shifting sea, reaching the Master in spite of unparalleled difficulties. Right here He prayed"—and right there I prayed—yes, prayed the whole night through. I do not say that I was on my knees all the time, or that I put all my thoughts into words—indeed, I never could put words into prayer for more than a few moments at a time; yet I prayed, and in the fourth watch of the night as day began to dawn the Master came to me.

I remember that I was looking off toward the east—on my knees I think I

was at the time—waiting for daybreak, and repeating over and over again that old cry in one of David's psalms, "My soul doth wait for God even as they who watch for the morning." I knew very well what David meant. I could not forget some of the night watches that I had known by the side of those whom I loved —how I had sat in the gloomy light of the flickering lamp when all the house was still, and had listened to the ticking of the clock as it marked the wave-beats of the fever heat that was consuming the life of my dear one. I could not forget how it had seemed darkest just before the dawn, and how always the dawn had come, no matter how he seemed to delay his coming. "O God," cried I, "even so wait I for Thee."

Then for a time I fell into a reverie; probably I slept, and if so my reverie was a dream; but awake or asleep the sentinel of my soul slumbered not, and the active thought of my waking hours was the ac-

tive thought of my dreams. I seemed to be walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; little by little the shade grew denser and deeper; the river flowing before me that I was soon to cross seemed blacker and wilder; the stars of heaven appeared to recall the welcome I fancied they had given me one by one, and the loneliness well-nigh oppressed me. Just then the vision changed. I was back in the home of my boyhood. It was Sunday afternoon. I was with my mother, and she was with the word of God. She was teaching me the twenty-third psalm: "'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' Say it, my boy, say it." And I said it. "'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,'" she repeated, "'I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.' Say that, too, my boy—'Thou art with me'—'Thou art with me.'" Then the two visions seemed to merge in one; and by the river bank where the darkness

could be felt, and with the waters already chilling me with their deathly touch, I shouted triumphantly the words of the shepherd boy's faith, "'Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,'" and the day dawned. I looked out on as rosy a dawn as ever shone down upon the sleeping waters of Galilee, and as I looked the "peace of God that passeth all understanding" filled my heart, while I saw the face and favor of God as surely as David, who ever prayed that the Lord might lift upon him the light of His countenance and grant him peace. "The porter has had his fidelity rewarded at last," said I, and I laughed as I said it, and the hills laughed too—the same little hills, I would fain have thought, that clapped their hands for joy, as David said, at the presence of the Lord. "He found the door; He found the porter ready: He called me by name; He is leading me out into new pastures and a larger life. Indeed, O God, Thou art with me."

Singing and laughing and leaping for joy, I made my way back to camp, where I found Peter up and awaiting me, though yet it was very early morning and we had no urgent plan for the day. It was not for some time that I found that he, too, had spent the night in prayer. When I spoke to him about it he said: "A friend prayed me into the kingdom; you would have done the same, wouldn't you? Why not I?" And I could say no more.

CHAPTER IX

"Couldn't you make it clear to him?" said I to John one Sunday evening when we were discussing the making of sermons. "Didn't he see your point?"

"No," said John, "I don't think that he did. He told me afterward that he liked it well enough—or some other colorless compliment of similar nature; that I seemed to be earnest and sincere but somewhat mystical."

John was speaking of one of his warmest friends and stanchest supporters, a member of his official board—indeed, if I mistake not, the treasurer of his church. He had told me some time before, in a conversation, or possibly in one of his letters, that he was not a professing Christian. "I used to call him Cornelius," said he, "a sort of offset, I guess, to Diotrephes. I couldn't be hard with one, you

know, without being possibly too easy with another. For instance," added he, not unwilling to drift lazily away from the thought we had started, "I called one brother Demas, for good and sufficient reasons; so had to nickname another one Clement, because of his lonely, not to say dogged, fidelity. Mary," said he, smiling a bit as I laughed at his odd way of characterizing his friends, "said that I had modernized for her the epistles and had made them interesting though not highly profitable, and wondered why I didn't do the same with the minor prophets; and that's the reason," said he, dryly, as though the suggestion of his wife's quiet wit had just dawned upon him, "why last April she persisted in calling me Jonah. She must have heard—though I never told her—of my plain words with the bishop when he wanted to send me to—Nineveh. Still, if that's the only revenge she took on me it's a mild one, hardly like her ordinarily wise and womanly adjust-

ment of rewards and penalties. I guess you know she's the head of our house," and the loyal old lover paused for a moment to smile and laugh at me what he hardly wanted to put into words; then, catching himself, added with quiet simplicity, "She's worth a score of such fellows as I am."

"Was the name Cornelius," said I, "any more wisely chosen?" I saw that it was high time for John to be getting back home. No matter what the subject, he always veered around before long to one topic. "I'm talking about Cornelius. Did the nickname fit?"

"Yes," said he, "I should say it did;" and then without more ado he began to sing the praises of one of those wholesouled fellows who too frequently keep outside the church, who put to shame many of the tall saints on the high seats of the synagogue, for whom the Master yearns and for whom His church at times is in agony in prayer. He told me of his

home life, of his business life, of his modesty, gentleness, and charity. He told me how he had cared for his aged mother, how he stood by his friends when in trouble, how he opend the door of his heart to the stranger; how he loaned his money to a brother in the hour of his emergency, who when prosperous had given to others only too liberally, but whom Brother Dives, class leader, trustee, steward, and saint *ex officio,* was "unable" to help; how he had compassion on "the ignorant and on them that were out of the way;" and how he was "stern to all forms of wrong and oppression; yet most stern toward himself." Then, taking a suggestion from the line he had quoted, he went aside from his thought for a moment to give me the rest of those noble words of Mrs. Kingsley, written to the memory of a righteous man, her husband. "Yes," said John, "I could use almost every word of them by way of tribute to Cornelius. He, too, was a man of 'untar-

nished honor,' 'loyal and chivalrous,' gentle and strong,' 'modest and humble,' with his highest virtues known only to his wife, his children, his servants, and the poor." Then after a moment he spoke of his practical liberality, as we style it when speaking of money. "He loved our nation," said John, "like that other centurion, and built us a synagogue—for it was he who gave most liberally toward our new church. He gave to missions and never sneered about the heathen at our door or about the office expenses of our self-sacrificing secretaries; he gave to the freedmen and did not rail at the South when doing so; he gave to the worn-out preachers without a sly thrust at our pardonable improvidence; he gave to the Tract Society, and, what is stranger still, took with courtesy what the society, or, rather, one of its self-constituted agents, gave to him—a leaflet thrust into his hand by an overzealous worker with the title 'Almost, but Lost.' He worked the

mischief with the dry-as-dust theology of one of our preachers who lived with him as neighbor and helper for three years. He made another preach his most memorable and apparently divinely inspired sermon from the text, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.' He moved another from Sinai to Calvary. He bothered the very life out of a student who supplied for a summer who thought 'he knew it all,' and who had come with his dozen sermons 'done up,' as it were, with his laundry in his seminary home. He induced another to quit preaching at his people and go to praying for them; and another—'your humble servant,'" added John—"to write a sermon on the text, 'One thing thou lackest,' that had neither force, nor clearness, nor freedom, nor the faintest suggestion of sense."

"So," said I, coming back to the question of some time before, "you did not make it clear to him? What was the matter?"

"Probably," said John, humbly and simply, "because I did not have in my own mind any distinction very clearly drawn. I remember, for example, that I had to read it. I could not for the life of me give it from notes. It was a part of my class-room theology, I guess—not a bit of the truth I had tested or had retained as gloriously worth the test."

"No," said I, "I hardly think that can be the reason. Anyway, we have all failed at the same place, even the masters among us. I remember hearing a great man preach at a camp meeting several years ago from the text, 'What lack I yet'—a companion verse to the one you struggled with. He made a pitiable failure; not because he was not clear, or because he did not have any very clearly drawn distinctions in mind, but because he did not speak the truth. No doubt he meant to do so, but he didn't; and when he is older he'll say the same thing. The fact of it is, Christian truth is like the

sand upon the seashore, or like the stars of the heavens above us—that's better." I looked up as I spoke to as magnificent a view as ever stirred the sublime faith of Abraham. "It's too vast to be taken in; too complicated in its manifold relationship—star with star, planet with planet, orbit crossing orbit, as it were—what else, I know not; too complicated and too stupendous for human speech, even if one could see it all in its true proportion and position. Indeed, the first heaven is high enough and grand enough to make a man mute, to say nothing of the third heaven. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things that God hath in store for those who love him.' Really, John, I think it was to your credit that you appeared mystical that morning. What do you say, Peter?"

"I agree with you," replied he, with characteristic decision. He had joined us a few moments before, just as we had settled down to the one topic that now

held our thought. We were again by the camp fire, and, as I have said, it was night. "I agree with you—that is," he added, quickly, "so far as the telling others is concerned, and so far as the knowing all of truth for one's self. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'"

"Still," said the old man, quaintly, "I reckon I'd know the wind was blowing. I'm pretty certain that I couldn't tell all that the Master might be to others, or even a good share of it, or all that He is going to be to me; still I can say something as to what He is now. If I don't know much about the wind—what started it and when it will die away to positive calm—I do know enough to say that I enjoy my shelter from the storm, and to ask even a stranger to come in and share it with me."

"What do you think Paul meant,"

said he, after a moment's pause, looking at me shrewdly, "when he said that right at the time when he wanted to learn concerning his new-found faith 'he conferred not with flesh and blood,' or what does he mean by always referring to his conversion as the time when 'it pleased God to reveal His Son in me'?"

"Well," said I, smiling in return, "you know I'm a Yankee, too, don't you? I'll answer your question by asking another. I guess I know what you are driving at. "What did he mean by staying only two weeks in Jerusalem with Peter and John and three years in Arabia alone?' "

"To find out from first sources for himself," was the ready and acceptable answer; "to answer for himself the question given to Pilate—the one every one of us hears sooner or later, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?' Think of the wonderful chance Paul had to learn of Christ from

the testimony of the Twelve, yet he seemed to care little for it. He spent no time with them to amount to anything. He never wrote to them. He failed to quote them or to quote from the same authorities they used; the best word he gives us of Christ, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' he got from sources that the rest had overlooked. He never asks to be remembered to them, not even to John when writing to the church in Ephesus. The fact is, he kept to himself. Still he knew Jesus Christ if ever a man did; and it looks as if he got acquainted with Him through the work He wrought upon his own life. He's forever asking his converts to take him as an example, a sort of pattern of the work that Christ could do. I guess he did the same—stood away from himself and watched the Lord make a saint out of him instead of a sinner. That's the reason why he saw so much in the Christian life. The rest of us looked only at the Saviour; he looked

at the Saviour and the 'things that accompany salvation' as well.

"Take that chapter we read this morning—the last one in his letter to the Philippians. It's full of God's giving—the gift of peace that passeth understanding, the gift of abundant supply for the hour of need, the gift of grace, and the gift of strength. Every one of these blessings Paul had seen in himself—not in the words of Christ, not in Holy Prophecy, not in revelation of any sort, but in himself. No wonder that he feels he can do anything—'through Christ who strengthens him.' So do I feel," said the old man, exultantly. He had risen and was walking up and down before the fire as he spoke. "He came to give to me—to give, not to take away. He took away my sin, my burden, my chance to go to the devil without remorse—but He did so because He wanted to give. He needed space in this old heart of mine, and He had to clear some things out that He might put

others in. The sun over the hill yonder comes to give daylight, but it can't do so without taking darkness away. Health comes to give color to your cheeks, but it can't do so without taking away the pallor and gloom you had when you came here. The taking away, though, is not the main thing, it's the giving. You and I are not to follow Christ so that we may learn what self-denial is, but are to deny ourselves so that we may follow Him. Denial, that so many of us talk about, has no good in itself, it is simply the putting of one thing out that another may come in. If one could happen without the other, there would be no denial; but it can't. So when you talk about the work of Jesus Christ, I prefer with Paul to speak of what He gives rather than what He takes away. I remember when I was a lad that I had a spell of sickness. The home folks didn't know what the matter was, and surely I didn't. We tried all kinds of remedies, and finally went to

the doctor. You see I hadn't been sick enough to go to him at first. Indeed, I felt ashamed to go when I did, for I couldn't tell him anything except that I seemed to have no life. I did my chores about the house, kept a fair place in my classes at school, but had no life; lived on principal, not on interest, as the schoolmaster said. Well, I went to see the doctor, and he gave me some medicine, so that in a month or so I was all right again. He opened up the chance for me to use the powers I had—didn't give me any new ones; put me where I was myself again—myself, no more nor less. I couldn't fly, couldn't write left-handed, couldn't run on all fours, couldn't think like a man nor act like one; I was a boy still and just the sort of boy I had been before my sickness. Some way or other the medicine had given me the power to use the powers I always had. You remember the time the Master healed a poor fellow with a withered arm? It was a

Sunday, you know, in church. The people who stood by blamed Him in their sneaking cowardice because, as they said, He was breaking the Sabbath. That made Him break it all the more. 'Stretch out your arm,' said He to the sick man, and he did so and was well. Remember that, don't you? Well, all that He did for that man was to give him the chance to use the powers he originally had. If he'd been a carpenter, he'd be a carpenter again; if he'd been a farmer, he'd be a farmer; a fisherman, a fisherman—knowing how to mend nets, row a boat, set a sail, cast a line: knowing how to do so and able to do it. He gave him the power to use his powers, that's all. He made it so that he could drive a blow, lift a load, shield a friend, grip and grasp and haul and pull and hold—make his muscle do the bidding of his brain—just as he could and just as he did before his sickness laid its hold upon him. That's what the Master did for me; gave me the chance to be

and do what I wanted to be and do down deep in my heart. I had the powers. He gave me the chance to use them. God gave me my powers at my first birth, and the powers to use them at my second. David had it right when he said, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.' Put that alongside of our Lord's words, 'Whom the Son makes free, he is free indeed,' and you see what a new creation in Christ Jesus amounts to—freed from weakness, and multiplied and magnified along the lines of his original worth. No wonder Paul said, 'I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' "

Here the old man paused, giving us a chance to add a word to his thought if we wanted to; yet we were silent, preferring that he follow it out in his own way.

"I used to know a blind boy," continued he, "who caned chairs for a living. His birth was humble, his education the simplest, and his outlook in life decidedly

sad. One day, however, he met the Lord and all was changed. It was in a little prayer meeting, and a student, or rather a young preacher just sent to us from the seminary as our pastor, had given an invitation to rise for prayers. The blind boy took it, and in a moment felt himself in the sweep of a new power. Every force of good and of worth and peculiarly his own was set free—so that he came to be mighty near what he prayed he might be. He went out among the people preaching the gospel of a living Redeemer, assured of freedom and favor such as the world could never give. Many a time have I seen him going about his self-appointed pastoral work, carrying home a chair he had caned and unconsciously framing the message of salvation he was going to leave in the next home that would open to him; deep in thought, unconscious of his surroundings, led by a boy deaf and dumb. 'Poor material,' thought I, as I saw him and his leader

for the first time, 'out of which to make a leader;' yet God did it."

"John," said Peter, suddenly turning with unwonted kindness to the man who loved him, "don't get discouraged because the people don't understand you. Of course they can't. I never could make a landsman understand how to take my boat across the lake. Years ago I tried to tell a man how it happened that two boats could go in opposite directions in the same wind, but I made a poor case of it. The trouble of it was he didn't know a mast from a boom, or a halyard from an anchor rope—hardly knew the points of the compass. Of course I couldn't tell him how to manage the force, or how the wind did what it did, but I gave him many a good sail."

"Yes," said Peter, after a moment of thought, running back to his point of departure, "He strengthened me; made me more of a man—a man, not an angel nor a saint in the heavenly sense."

It had been quite difficult for me for a time to follow fully his line of thought. All that he said seemed true enough, but I could not catch its pertinence. Indeed, I do not know now that I have repeated every turn in the conversation really essential to an understanding of his position. As one might readily see, it was difficult to report conversations so unpremeditated and informal and unguarded. Truth kept company with error, and no man was bothered by it. Premises were lost and conclusions forsaken, theories advanced but not supported. Much was said by the attitude, the tone, the temper of the speaker—indeed, more than by his words. I had said, as you recall, that the trouble with John was that he did not tell the truth, that unconsciously he tried to drive home to the mind of his friend Cornelius a pious error and have it pass as an inspired revelation. John had said about the same thing when he admitted that he had had no clearly drawn distinc-

tions, and Peter had started with the admission of the same fact. He, however, as the conversation advanced had modified what he had said, and had turned away from the main thought to a testimony of the work of Christ within one and not for one. Evidently he meant to say that each man was to be led to look for God's work within his own heart, to listen to God's voice in the chambers of his own soul, to be led by argument, if you will, to a point where he forsakes argument and listens to authority, to be led by man to a place where he will desert man. What was needed was not to carry your hearer with you, but to send him away from you—provided you send him the right way. Then when he hears God's voice and sees God's method of work he will find that he himself is not so much a new man as a freed man.

"He's a force now," continued Peter, taking up my thought unconsciously, as if to confirm my analysis of his thought.

"I can do; not I could do, or am going to do, or hope to be able to do; I can, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Well do I remember a night in the old church at home when a well-intentioned brother magnified 'dying grace.' It was a pretty dull meeting up to that time, for it was summer and the preacher was away on his vacation and the Carpenter was up at the courthouse. The Carpenter and others who were generally the life of the meeting were not there," said he, recovering himself. "A brother volunteered to kill the meeting, or, rather," said the old man, savagely, "to lay out the corpse, and so spoke of dying grace. Just then the door opened and the Carpenter came in. He had come from trials that I may remember to tell you of sometime, and with even greater trials awaiting him. He was bearing a heavy burden and there was no Simon of Cyrene standing by. He waited till I had finished and then rose and said, 'Brother

Peter has told the truth. My God is a help now, a very present help, too; therefore I will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.' Why talk of a probable help in the future when you may have all that is needed in the present? 'I would have fainted,' said he, 'unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.'

"That's what he said," concluded Peter, rising as if to cut off the conversation, "or that's about what he said. I can never put it the way he did. Then he prayed and then he sang, and then," faltered he, falling back through the centuries, "when we had sung a hymn we went out into the Mount of Olives."

CHAPTER X

I AM unable to recall any one extended conversation with Peter on the subject of the temptation of Christ, though I very vividly recollect the views he held. They were not those entertained—certainly, at first—by either John or myself, and I cannot say that I fully assent to them now. Yet they accord fairly well with what we find in Scripture, if not in the Creed, and bring the Master very near to His struggling brethren. Indeed, the nearness of Christ was the one thing I saw especially in all the teaching of Peter, and I was too deeply grounded in the faith and too happily conscious of immediate communion with God to think that the old fisherman's vagaries had led him to false conclusions. Before the loss of his reason—or mental balance, possibly I should say, he had lived in the warmest, closest friendship

with one of "God's noblemen"—for evidently Peter's friend was all of that—and at the same time had been peculiarly under the influence of a simple faith in the Saviour of Galilee. He had prized the friend at hand, and was studying deeply and continuously the life of the One whom he wanted to believe to be also at hand. It was, then, quite natural for him on his partial recovery from his overmastering grief, mentally unsettled as he continued to be, to bring back one picture instead of two, or to throw around the divine Friend glorifying the gospel story the human halo of a hero in the humble Christ-inspired life of to-day. However he had obtained it, I believed that he had found the truth, and that the light that shone through darkened windows into the chamber of his soul was more like God's sunlight than the light that one saint in ten thousand of the rest of us would probably ever know. Peter's Master I believed to be the true one; and Peter's wit-

ness to His character worthy my respect if not my full assent. "Is not this what Christ wants?" said I, time and time again. "Does He not seek just the simple unstudied intimacy that Peter gives to Him; and may not the Holy Spirit have combined the elements of truth in the life of the loyal servant of to-day with those of everlasting truth in the Master of all time?"

There were, therefore, no topics of any size touching the life of Christ that we did not ask Peter's opinion about; and I do not recall one conclusion that was not well fortified in Scripture and human experience. So, as I have said, we did not shrink from asking his views as to the temptation. I knew very well what some of his conclusions would be before I sought them. I knew that Jesus of Nazareth was to him a man, a perfect man, and consciously no more. I realized very well that his endeavor to find in Christ an example and friend, to get on an even

footing with Him, if you will, where he could be sure of sympathy and a mutual love, had led him to see the human side and to trust that he might in time see the divine side of the Redeemer. "I had to find something in Christ," said he to me at one time, "that seemed to be real and I found it; and while I do not doubt that all you say is real too—indeed, I believe it is—I can't as yet see it. I can see Him as a Perfect Man and get everything out of that that I need. In His own good time He will show me His Deity as well. Till that time I'll work with what I see and be quiet with what I believe. He was a man and consciously no more."

I knew, too, the distinction he made between conscious knowledge and knowledge obtained by study, experience, or revelation. He steadily insisted that Christ lived simply a life of faith; that He was shut away from consciousness of His exalted position either in the past or the present or the future; that He knew

what He did because God had told Him directly, or because of His study of the prophecy and pattern of the coming Messiah. He made much of the revelations that followed the recorded prayers of Christ. He said that it stood to reason that if Christ went into the Jordan praying at the time of His baptism, there to hear the words, "Thou art my Son in whom I am well pleased," He had prayed to find out who He was and whether He had done well so far; that if He went up the Mount of Transfiguration praying there to meet Moses and Elias, and to get from them a word as to the next step toward the cross, and to hear from heaven, "Thou art my Son in whom I am well pleased," He had prayed for just that help; that if He broke off His conversation with the Greeks during one of those crowded hours of Passion Week to pray as pathetic a prayer as was ever offered—"O God, now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from

this hour: but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name"—and to hear in response the words, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again"—it was a prayer to be certified from on high that He had made no slip as yet. From the beginning to the end He lived a life of faith, strengthened by the deepest knowledge ever given to one of the plans of God as shown in prophecy and type and history and human yearning, and fortified at the crisis when His shoulders were bending under the burden and His brain reeling with the immensity of the questions calling for an answer by direct revelation. I remember that Peter dared to find by holding to this thought an explanation of the agony in the garden and the bitter cry upon the cross. It was faith, strengthened, fortified, and at the last fearfully tested by the withholding of the answer. Nor was Peter left to his own unaided thinking in reaching this conclusion. It was largely based on that passage in

Hebrews that I have possibly referred to, "the author and finisher of our faith." Some one had told him that the word "our" didn't belong there; that the clumsy though well-intentioned translators had put it there unconsciously to show what they didn't know; that "author and finisher" meant nothing more nor less than "chief example." "It was easy then," said Peter, "to see the drift of the apostle's argument. Look, if you will, at the great heroes of the faith till you get from them all the help and inspiration they may give, and then just as the race is to be started, just as the human arrow is to speed toward its mark, leave them and look to Jesus. Abraham, Moses, Gideon, and the others named in that never-fading roster of the leaders of the faithful are not to be compared with Him. He is preeminently the chief example of faith.

"It was His faith, then, that was tested in the terrible temptation in the wilderness, or rather His loyalty to a life of

faith. He had the power to speak a word and see, yet chose to live as we have to live and as the Father willed that He should live, shut away from sight in the darkness and seeming denial and terrible strain of unquestioning reliance upon Him. It is this view only," said Peter, "that explains the time of the temptation as well as the fact and form. 'Tis easy to see that the deepest solitude alone could satisfy the soul of one who had heard the most marvelous message from God: even the Saviour needed the chance to collect Himself, to readjust the plans of His life, calmly to trace the next duty, and to question the truth of what He had heard. He had no more right—since He was a man with man's inherited, possibly divinely ordained method of search for truth—to take without question such an unparalleled announcement of glory and duty as the word from Heaven at His baptism than one of us would have had. It was, indeed, the spirit of the man, His personal traits

as well as His temperament inherited from a long line of inquiring ancestors, His spirit, as well as the Spirit of God, that drove Him into the wilderness.

"So," said Peter, "it is easy to see that there was but one temptation, not three; three forms of the one, if you will, but only one. The struggle of the Master was to verify by means at hand the truth of the message He had heard, or to verify the fact that He had heard such a message, not imagined that He had heard it. If He were the Son of God it would be easy to speak to the stones at His feet and see them turn to bread; it would be easy to verify His position, but to do so by a miracle, that would bring Him into the realm of sight and away from the plain and beaten path of faith to be trodden by all the sons of God. Painfully did He yearn to know with deeper certainty, but to do so by the exercise of the power said to be His would be forever to take Him away from the life the rest of us have to

live. The fact that the suggestion was given that He prove His position by making bread had some worth, but very little. The strength of the temptation was found in the desire to satisfy the hunger of a troubled, startled soul—not such hunger as even Elijah in his despondency could well endure. The Master had meat to eat that the devil and the average commentator knew not of. He won His victory in the decision to live upon the strength of the word He had heard—rather than on the evidence of the sight and taste of divinely created food.

"It is the same position of mind that renders intelligible the form of the second struggle. He is taken in spirit into the Holy City and placed on a pinnacle of the temple, there to work His way to the same divinely intended choice—the life of faith, not the life of certainty through sight; for ever the one great question clamors for an answer. 'Art thou the Son of God, art thou? The Son of Mary, the Carpenter

of Nazareth, the peasant of obscurity, art thou the Christ? It looks so, but art thou? There are many indications: Prophecy pointing through the ever-lessening gloom of the past; the peculiar stories of the birth at Bethlehem; the power to live with no sense of sin, with no deed of error in conception or conclusion; the mastery of the mission of the Christ as none of the teachers have mastered it; and above all the word spoken at the baptism. Art thou? It looks so, but it may not be. Prove it; prove it. See for yourself. Cast yourself down from the pinnacle, and if you are the Son of God you will be kept; and if you are not, you'll forever end this terrible struggle and strain.' Mind you," said Peter, "this was after forty days of testing; after forty days of silence, too. The word once spoken—'Thou art my Son'—was not repeated. Possibly He may not have asked for it, yet it hardly seems likely; and if He did not, one's prayer is not dependent on the words

spoken or not spoken. His whole struggle was a prayer, yet a prayer for forty days practically unanswered. Is it strange, then, that He was tempted to risk it all by one plunge? His very nobility and grandeur necessitated as well as explained the pinnacle temptation. He had no thought of self-advancement; no care to further any aims that were His own. He was Courage incarnate. He could dare anything; could even set His face steadfastly to go toward the deepening gloom of the cross; could die with a cry of noble perplexity yet majestic fidelity; could show the tenderness of infinite love even when it looked as if the poorest of human love were denied Himself; could ever give, give, give, with no thought of receiving in return. Other men have stood on the pinnacle with something of these same thoughts. Why not He? His nobility put Him there, not His pride; for pride or the desire to be seen of men had no more to do with the pinnacle tempta-

tion that hunger with the temptation in the wilderness, nor as much. It was to see who He was, to see, not to await God's pleasure to reveal and to trust until such revelation came. He was tempted to live as His brethren could not live, to walk by sight and not by faith, to put God to the test and get His word in reply that would settle all doubt. Gloriously did He answer: ''Tis written, Man shall not test God.' I've no right to try Him. In His own good time and in His own good way He'll let me see my place and duty. Till then I'll go ahead with reliance on His word.' It is easy to see that this unselfishness, this reckless though glorious abandon of the pinnacle temptation, underlies the struggle on the high mountain as well. Having dared to think of risking all in one form, 'tis easy to think of risking all in another. What's the work of the Son of God, anyway? To live for the glory of the Father. What is to be done? To bring all the world in subjection to Him.

Why not, then, in this uncertainty accomplish all that the Son if successful would do—that I might do if I were the son—by the surrender of self in one act of worship to Satan, and by the loss of one secure for God the salvation of all? Why not? Simply because the word of God stands in the way. 'Tis one's duty 'to worship God,' and 'tis written, 'Him only shalt thou serve.' From the first to the last He stood the test and kept His footing in the strait and narrow path leading to God."

How much of what I have written is Peter's only, I am not now sure; but I am certain that the main conclusions and general line of argument are his. Time and time again he told us that it was the only view—this suppression into a life of faith—that made the Master live for him; that it was the only view that seemed to lend sufficient solemnity to the incarnation. The element of terrible risk, or the sense of such risk in the mind of the Master, was the only thing that could give a

strain sufficient to make the Son of God the "Man of Sorrows." How could He weep or sweat great drops of blood if He knew the end from the beginning? How could He work out your salvation or mine if He were complacently sure of His own? How could He help any one of us who cannot see one step in advance, if He could see the whole shining path for Himself? How could He dare to approach a hero of the faith in the Heaven where finally all the saints are to meet, and not bow before him in deepest humility and respect, if He had won His fight at high noon while His humbler brother had won at midnight?

With many of these conclusions I knew that John was grieved—he never could dare a new thought save one of seemingly direct revelation. As for myself, I remember that I wondered what I would do with the wreckage of some of my stock arguments concerning the Saviour's unique position among men; though when

I tried to show them to Peter they did not seem to impress him very deeply, or in fact to amount to much, after all. I know that he heard me with wonderful kindness though evident perplexity. "Do you mean to say," said he, "that you think I doubt that Jesus of Nazareth is my divine Saviour? Do you mean to say that I doubt that He is God; that the Word which dwelt among us was in the beginning with God, in the beginning was God Himself?" I dared no answer, and he seemed to care for none. "Do you men think because I believe that He walked this earth a man, struggling and bothered like the rest of us, that I doubt that He is God? Well, if you do, you don't know me; and if you do, I don't care to know you."

"I have to make something out of this record," said the sturdy old fellow as he held up his copy of the New Testament, worn with such usage as no saint I ever knew had ever given it, "and I have to

make something that helps me, too; and if what I've found will hurt me when I stand before Him up yonder, I'm sure that He will make it all right. At any rate, it helps me here."

This last word, I recall, was spoken one night as we were setting out from camp to see where Peter had walked the sea. It was at the old man's urgent invitation that we were going, and we could not well refuse. "Come," said he, "I'll show you where I reached the Master in spite of fearful difficulties."

CHAPTER XI

It was with something of a feeling of awe that we noticed just before the dawn the signs of a gathering storm. For hours we had been upon the lake, having set out from camp a little past midnight. The conversation of the evening in the pleasurable warmth of the camp fire, and the tardy rising of the moon whose light we waited, had delayed us. Still, as we had no task for the following day, we could be reckless in our use of the hours of the night; or, better, we could afford to yield to every whim of our strange guide who hoped to bring us back to shore some time during the "fourth watch" of the night.

Peter at first had said very little. He had seemed to be more than ordinarily perplexed. Our failure to recall the scene of the night he was about to describe—

or, rather, the impersonal way in which we spoke of it and the questions we had asked him—was more than he could bear. He was ready enough to revisit with John and Thomas the spot where each had enjoyed a common experience, but not to assume that the experience had been his alone. Little by little, however, he had settled back into his customary cheer and good fellowship.

"Of course I reached the side of Christ," said he, simply. "How could I help it? I had faith—and a lot of it, too. It took me off the seat and out of the boat, anyway. It gave me a good start. It carried me out that far, at least"—and the old man pointed as he spoke to a spot a dozen steps or so away from where we were. "You don't suppose," said he, looking at each one of us quickly, as if to catch us off our guard, "that I sank right down here, do you? Hadn't I walked far enough to get within reach of Christ? Don't tell me," added he, hastily, though

neither of us had any thought of interrupting him, "that He blamed me for my 'little faith.' He did nothing of the kind —or not as you mean it. 'Twasn't my lack of faith in Him that He rebuked, but my little confidence in the teaching of my own experience. Think of it! I'd walked a dozen steps or so—had heard the ring of the sea under my feet, had tested it and found 'twas solid—and then had lost my nerve. No! He honored and loved me for my faith in Him, but blamed me for my lack of faith in myself. The man who can go nine steps has no right to think that he can't go a tenth, too. If it was little faith in Him that He was rebuking, why didn't He say something to the rest of you who hadn't dared to quit your seats? Then, too," added he, as if he were trying to persuade himself of the truth of his own explanation, "when was it ever the habit of the Master to take notice of the one failure of a friend rather than the many victories. Not a bit of it. I

had faith in Him. So far as His rebuke for my little faith in myself is concerned He was ever doing that," added he, good-humoredly. "I was ever a sort of object lesson to the rest of you. Don't forget, either, that I came at His invitation. 'If it be Thou,' said I, 'bid me come unto Thee on the water,' and He said 'Come.' Of course, I say, I reached Him. Let a man but hear the voice of Jesus bidding him come, and obey it, even if the path be as rough as the stormy sea and as uncertain as the fickle water—even if his faith fail him—yes, his faith in the Master, too, as well as his confidence in himself—even if he begin to sink and think that he is about to perish—he will reach Him. He'd given me an invitation! Possibly I was rash to ask for it, but I'd got it. Even if I hadn't," added he, catching an inspiration from the sympathetic face of John, "He would have stood by me."

"There is one thing more that many of us seem to forget," said he, looking as he

spoke out toward the spot where he said he sank, "and an important thing, too. I wasn't the only one walking the sea. The Master was coming toward me just as surely as I was going toward Him. The desire to meet was not all on one side. I wasn't the only one in a hurry. 'Ye have not chosen me,' said the Master at one time, 'but I have chosen you.' Say," said Peter, turning toward me impulsively, "suppose He'd been a hundred yards away when He'd given the invitation, and suppose I'd walked only half a dozen steps—do you think I'd have reached Him?" He gave me no chance to answer, for he broke out into one of the most unexpected and yet contagious peals of laughter that I had ever heard. The idea that the Master needed time to get to the side of a true-hearted friend, obedient to His call and pluckily doing a hard deed in the spirit of faith in Him, seemed to Peter to be positively ridiculous. "Don't you forget, Thomas, the next time you go up the

mountain side to pray and to meet your God face to face, that He has come a long distance to meet you, and that He can cover the distance from Heaven to earth more quickly than you can go from the camp to the hillside," and then he laughed again, with more faith in his peals of uncontrollable merriment than the most of us place in the most stately and dignified praise.

So for an hour or more the old man told his experience and quietly and lovingly taught his lessons. Some of his interpretations of Scripture story, as I write them to-day, seem to have simply the merit of novelty—if indeed that be a merit; others, the most of them, seem to have been worthy the further study that John and I afterward gave them. It is certain that he made the scene and the lesson of that night wonderfully helpful. "Don't worry about your difficulties," said he, kindly, more as a father would talk to his sons than as a companion, "I mean

your difficulties on the way toward Christ or Truth, or fulfillment of duty, or abundant life here, or triumphant life hereafter; you'll reach what you seek if you're honest and have His word that you're on the right track. The greatest difficulty of all," concluded he at last, taking note of our anxiety over the coming storm, "is to get up off your seat, not to walk the water."

For some time, as I have said, I had noticed the ominous anger of the gathering clouds, though not with fear or disappointment. Indeed, I was doing my best to imagine that I was on the Sea of Galilee in very truth; that I was Thomas in fact, a peasant of primitive days naturally of small aims and limited experience, not a preacher of more complex life and outlook; and so hailed most gladly any additional help that could make my fancy real. A lake untouched by a storm certainly could not pass for the Sea of Galilee. Still, the storm had to be guarded

against, and I was not sorry when Peter saw the cause of our uneasiness.

Very quickly the storm broke upon us. Cloud after cloud came rolling over the summit of the hills to the northeast of the lake, as if pushed forward by an unseen force from some dark cavern just beyond our limited horizon, sweeping away vindictively, so it seemed, the glory of the night. One by one the stars sank sadly out of sight, and little by little the moon withdrew her welcome and her cheer. Spitefully, but none the less perfectly, the preparations for the descent of the Spirit of the air were carried forward. Soon we heard his voice angrily howling his commands to the sleeping shallows by the shore not as quick to do his bidding as the deeper waters out toward the center; soon we saw him, as it were, thrash with unjustifiable fury the waves about our little boat, already doing their best to resent our lingering any longer with them in safety. In very truth

the "winds were boisterous." Never did tyrant conscious of the dawn of a long-looked-for opportunity, and angered by his delay beyond all reason, handle his helpless victim with greater rudeness than did the stranger Spirit which swept down from the hills handle us.

All this we noticed while actively at work. We were really in no little danger, though not one of us seemed to have any concern. Our boat was but a plaything in the hands of the storm, and we were not much better. We managed to keep afloat, though the opening of a seam under one of the thwarts let in the water more rapidly than one of us could bail it out. Peter, therefore, was the only one free to take the oars, though one man could make but little, if any, headway against the storm. I caught a glimpse of his face during one of the lightning flashes that now came fast and furious. It was singularly calm and strangely expectant. It was evident that he needed no stimulus

to give vigor to his imagination. I knew what he looked for, for even I gazed out over the surface of the waters in involuntary search of a familiar form, even I fancied that I saw a spirit, and wondered why Peter did not call out to it. How long the storm lasted I do not know, but long enough to give me ever afterward a wholesome respect for fresh-water fury, and long enough, too, for the fourth watch of the night to wear away into the morning. When the day began to dawn we found that we were nearer shore than we had supposed, and that two of us could probably drive the boat to land before the water could so gain upon us as to sink us. So it happened that I was at the oars aiding Peter, and that John was the only one facing the shore, and the first one to see the Carpenter.

The parallel so far is sufficiently strange to allow me to note a few points of dissimilarity between the old and ever-to-be-loved record of the gos-

pels and my own peculiar story. I have not cared, I ought to say right here, to call attention to many of the differences: indeed, I have tried, as one might readily understand, not to see them, and I doubt if ever man had such remarkable help in a similar endeavor as I had.

The man who stood on the shore in no way resembled the Carpenter of Nazareth of centuries ago. He was fully sixty years of age and looked even older. He had not kindled a fire on the beach as the Master had done, nor had he called out to find if we had caught any fish. He simply stood there watching us, evidently ready to offer any help within his power, if the chance should offer. He said nothing till John called attention to him, and then only some word of cheer and simple greeting. Strange to say, I do not think that Peter heard him at first, for he kept sturdily bending to the oars driving our little boat more and more surely toward a place of safety. It was only when his

name was spoken, not the name he had given himself but the name once familiar in the misty past, that he was startled to a sense of a crisis in his pathetic, monotonous life. He trembled from head to foot. Agony, hope, fear, love—all the great passions of the human soul save anger and the sufferings of sin, sent their varied light to his face in almost instantaneous succession. He dropped his oars, fell to his knees, groaned as does one arousing from a troubled dream, cast questioning, pathetic glances toward John and me, and then threw himself into the shallow water and surged forward to the shore.

John and I had no chance to pay close heed to the greeting that followed. I do not think that much was said by either of them; I am sure that there was but little demonstration of feeling, or rather little in the conventional way. They tarried a few moments, Peter simply looking at his old friend, and the Carpenter quietly in-

tent on our efforts to bring our sinking boat to land. When we touched the shore both of them were moving slowly away deep in conversation.

That night we were aroused, John and I, by the Carpenter, who had been sleeping by the side of Peter, to give what turned out to be most timely help. The poor old fisherman was burning with fever, tossing and moaning in unmistakable delirium. He was living once more in the first century, more really apparently than at any time since we had met him. He failed to recognize any one of us, even the Carpenter. He was evidently fearfully worried, for the poor troubled brain was dealing with questions that he could not possibly answer. At times he seemed to be sinking under the waters of Galilee, at times to be struggling with Malchus in the Garden of Gethsemane; at times it looked as if he were suffering as near as a guiltless soul could Peter's remorse for the denial. He would weep bitterly, and

then break forth with the cry, "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

It was several hours before John returned with the doctor. In the meantime, however, the Carpenter and I had not been idle. We had made him a good bed, had taken off his clothes still damp with the drenching of the storm of the previous night, and had given from our simple medicine chest repeated doses of some standard remedy for the reduction of fever. It didn't look, though, for a long time as if we had done any good, for he seemed literally to be consuming with some inward fire when the physician arrived. For three days and nights it was a hand-to-hand struggle between life and death. Never did a patient have better care. I do not think the doctor left him for more than an hour at any one time—even then he was within easy call—until the crisis had passed. I well remember the morning. It was the Lord's Day.

We were all in the little hut talking in subdued tones by the fire on the hearth. The Carpenter had been telling in his quiet, modest way a few of the incidents of his life. It seems that the sentence of death had been commuted, because of previous good character (I remember his look, partly scorn, partly sorrow, and partly a holy pride when he repeated this phrase), to imprisonment for life. Even this boon was not granted till the day set for his execution. Then followed nearly thirty years in prison, thirty years of almost absolute loneliness. Few, indeed, were the friends who followed him even with messages into the darkened world he had been so cruelly forced to enter. "A man's foes," said he, sadly, "are those of his own household." No word ever came to him from Peter (he now used, and with pleasure, the name his old friend had taken). For weeks, months, possibly a year or so, he had looked for some word from the associate of his brighter days,

but none had come. It was not till he had regained his freedom a few weeks before that he found out the cause of Peter's silence. His freedom, by the way, was also a tardy justification. A deathbed confession well attested, and supported by certain evidence that it had revealed, had completely vindicated him of the charge under which he had been sentenced. He had practically died—though involuntarily in this case—that another might live.

In the old town of his youth he found very few who remembered him, and only one who remembered Peter. The lad who had seen the crazy man, as he called him, hurrying over the fields shouting out the words, "I go before you into Galilee," could not forget him. It was he, now a prosperous merchant and member of the church where John once preached, who had told the Carpenter of the old hermit fisherman of the beautiful lake miles away in the depths of the woods, and who had suggested that possibly the hermit and his

old friend might be one and the same person. "So," said the Carpenter, "I sought him in Galilee till I found him."

"If my dreams had been true," said Peter, startling us as though a voice had come from the dead, "I might think that you had come up out of your grave."

"What dreams?" said the doctor, quietly, while we all listened to see if indeed the delirium had passed away.

"A long, long dream, how long I know not—that I was living in other days."

The recovery after this was rapid—he had nothing now to bother him—and his physical health, ever so true and clean, rallied to his help. We had sense enough to call him immediately and ever afterward by the name the Carpenter told us had been his, and to make no reference to Galilee or our remarkable experience during the last few weeks. Time, of course, was needed for readjustment of his nerves. He knew that he had been sick—that was all the doctor said—for

years. He knew that the last thirty years had not been years of idleness. Possibly, he guessed at times what he had been doing and why he was so far away from the home and toil of his younger manhood. But he said very little. He was himself once more, and dared not toy with a troubled past. Once more we took our names, though reluctantly. Neither birth nor choice of parents had given me a name equal to that of Thomas, and, as I said some time ago, I never call John by any other name than that the fisherman gave him.

It is needless to say there was no change in Peter's loyalty to his Master, and no change in his vivid reading of the Gospel story. It was a treat, indeed, to hear the two of them—the Carpenter and Peter—talk of Christ. The Carpenter had been tested as few men have been tested, yet he had come out of the trial with a faith as simple as that of a child. "It seems to me," said he, "that

we are forced to one of two conclusions: either to put God fearfully far away from us—off sleeping or hunting where Elijah said the priests would find Baal—or mighty near. He means either everything to each one of us or nothing. And I," added he, "prefer to take the more defensible view that He is everything, and always nigh unto them who call upon Him."

The night before we left camp to return to our homes the Carpenter and Peter told us of their plans for the future. As soon as Peter was fully able—and that they thought would be in a few days—they were going down into the logging camps to carry the Gospel to men by nature and training much like themselves.

"I guess I've been idle for years," said Peter, "and I know that the Carpenter has. I want to get once more to work. I want to tell of a Saviour who is able to keep a man to-day—to make salvation a fact of the life that we know as life; I want to

tell it to men who will hear it without minding the way I say it. I don't know the tools you use in your schools and city churches, and if I did I couldn't use them —and if I could—" He said no more, but laughed a loving, ringing, manly laugh—his whole soul in it, and his deepest regard for both of us in it, too—that took away, even if it had been necessary, what might have seemed a reflection on the sermons we average men preach.

The next morning we said "Good-bye," and crossed the divide we named "Nineteen Centuries" soon to reenter our work at home.

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THOMAS

Simon Peter, fisherman